THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO MAKING MONEY FROM YOUR DESIGN SKILLS

COMPUTER arts projects

THE IN-DEPTH GUIDE FOR DIGITAL CREATIVES

START YOUR OWN DESIGN BUSINESS

FROM CREATING A LOGO TO LANDING YOUR FIRST CLIENT...

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

LOGOS & STATIONERY
Create a unique and memorable brand identity that really works

KILLER PORTFOLIO
Discover how to design a stylish and easy-to-use online showcase

DESIGNER SECRETS
How the world's leading digital artists got their first big break

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Welcome

Starting any business can be a daunting prospect, especially if you're coming straight out of college. And this month, we've departed from the usual remit, bringing you an in-depth guide to launching your career as a professional designer or illustrator.

Whether you're still at university, or simply think the design skills you've learnt are put to waste, this issue will bring you all the guidance you need to start your own business and begin making money from your creativity.

You'll find practical guidance to starting your own design firm, the best cities in the world in which to go it alone, how to find the right hosting company and not pay over the odds, and discover how some of the world's most successful artists and illustrators got their first big break.

In addition, we bring you a fantastic in-depth tutorial on creating your own brand identity (and using it in the real world) from Deep Creative – one of the world's leading brand specialists. There are also 50 tips on managing the financial and marketing side of your business, as well as how to deal with clients, printers and how to tackle that all-important first brief.

Enjoy the issue, and don't forget to let me know what you think at the email address below. Until next time...

Rob Carney, Associate Editor

Tell us what topics you'd like to see covered in-depth in *Computer Arts Projects*. Contact us on: **rob.carney@futurenet.co.uk**

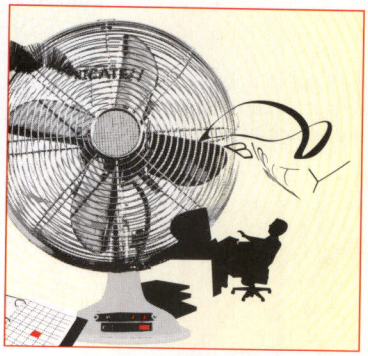
Contributing artists

COVER ILLUSTRATION

Beat13

Beat13 is the name Lucy Mclauchlan and Matt Watkins adopted for themselves and the self-initiated audio-visual collaborative projects they instigate. Beat13 began in 1999 and to date the company's clients include Carharrt, Smart Car, Gorillaz, *The Guardian* and many more.

[w] www.beat13.co.uk



Deep Creative

Deep Creative is a London-based creative agency that recently celebrated its seventh anniversary. Domanic James from Deep shows you exactly how to create your own brand identity from scratch (see page 22), how to get your company message across in the correct way, and how to use your brand originally.

[w] www.deep.co.uk

Gary Neill

Gary Neill is a freelance illustrator who specialises in fulfilling editorial briefs, and this month he shares his workflow with you, showing you how to tackle that extremely important first brief. If you want to make money from your artwork, you need to read this tutorial.

See page 78...

[w] www.garyneill.co.uk

We're always on the lookout for new artists as well as established creatives – so if you're interested in contributing to the magazine, please send some examples of your work to **[e] johann.chan@futurenet.co.uk**

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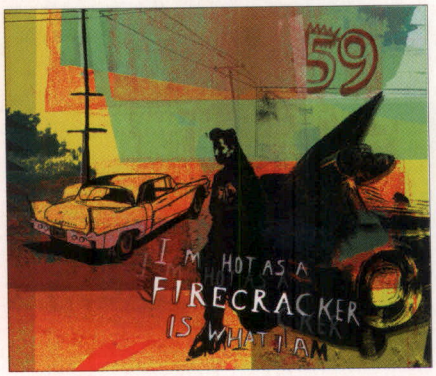

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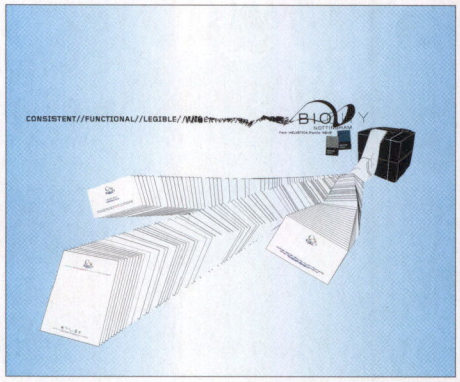

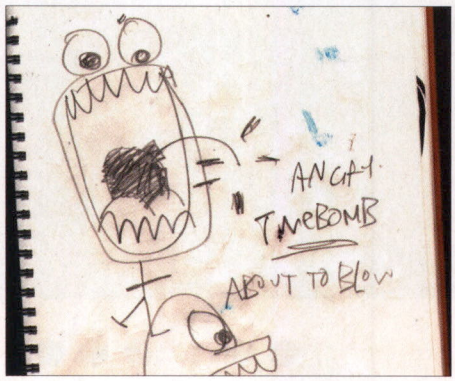

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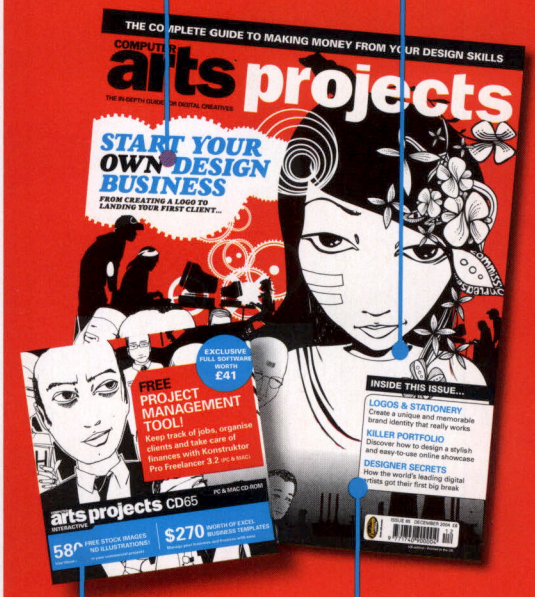
Create your own identity, craft brilliant stationery and build an online portfolio with this month's expert tutorials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Konstruktor Pro Freelancer 3.2
Manage your design projects and clients with ease using this full software

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A fantastic collection of 580 stock images and *Excel* templates

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Studio showcase

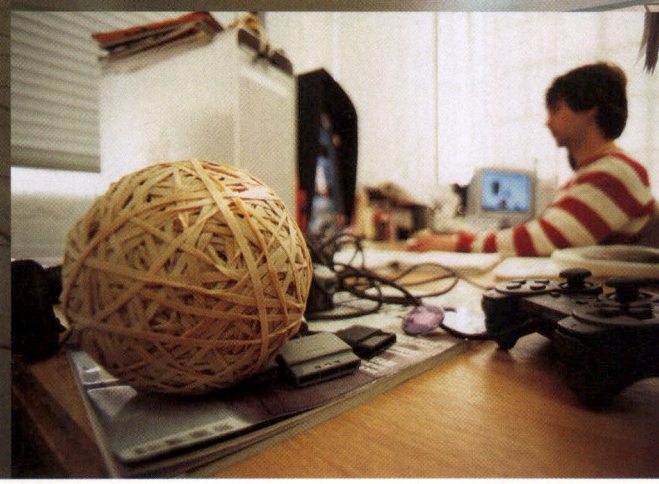
Three design businesses let us into their creative suites...

The studio is where it all happens. Whether you're working out of your modest spare bedroom, busy shop premises, or a swanky new urban development, your work space needs to be comfortable and inspiring. We enter the studios of three cutting-edge design businesses to find out what works for them. **ca>p**

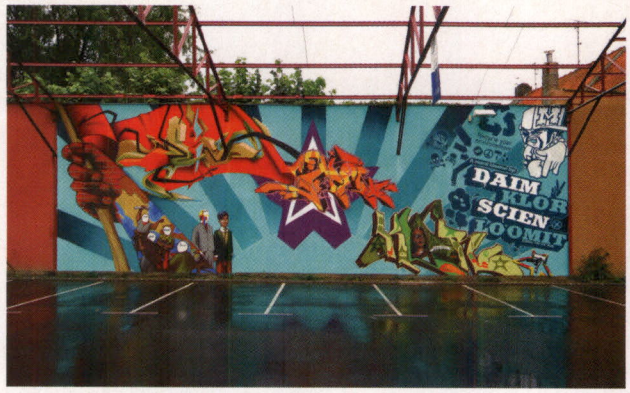
Fluid

When formed: September 1995.
First job: The artwork for a Stone Roses single.
Clients to date: Sony Computer Entertainment, Electronic Arts, Capcom, Microsoft /X-Box, Coca-Cola, EMI, Chrysalis, UK Film Council, BBC, Nivea, and many more.
Mission statement: Fluid exists in various forms that are brought together in multiple formats. Fluid does not seek to force a set style on any given situation, but rather adapts to the ideas and foresight of those it works with.
Office environment: Open, light, simple, messy.
Contact details: James Glover **[e]** james@fluidesign.co.uk or **[e]** drop@fluidesign.co.uk, **[w]** www.fluidesign.co.uk, **[t]** +44 (0)121 693 6913, **[f]** +44 (0)121 693 6911, **[p]** 1/222 The Custard Factory, Gibb Street, Birmingham, B9 4AA.

Photography by Johann Chan



Fluid work, from left to right:
Logo design for the Feed Arts Festival in April 2004.
Designs on Camden brochure for Camden Council.
Ghosthunter press pack.
Haircut Sir font.
Fierce Arts Festival brochure.



123klan

When formed: Graffiti business in 1989, graphic design department in 1994.

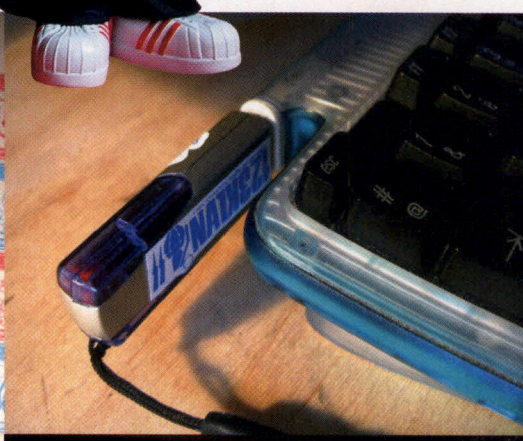
Clients to date: Carhartt, Nike, Stanton, Mini Austin Cooper, *Wired* magazine, *PlayStation* magazine, *Computer Arts*, Musée d'art Moderne de Villeneuve d'Ascq, Kitchen93, Jager Di Paula Kemp Design.

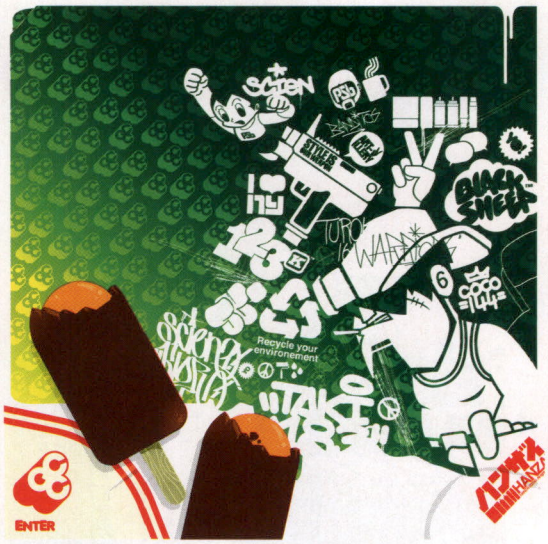
Mission statement: Like graffiti we want to spread our style everywhere on everything, we want to keep it real and have fun. Our mission in three words would be: ADAPT, IMPROVISE, DOMINATE. Which is the French Para Commando currency.

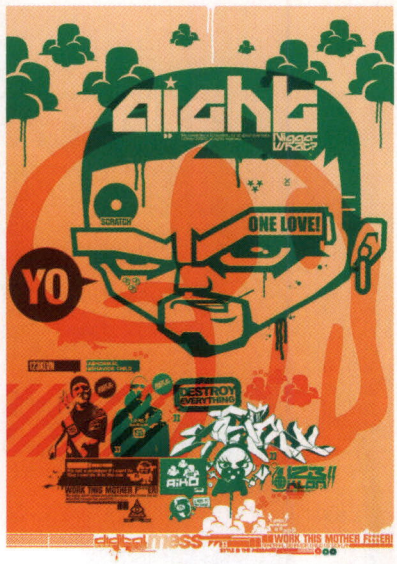
Office environment: OUR SPACE ROCK THA HOUSE (^_^)

Contact details: **[w]** www.123klan.com, **[e]** scien-klor@123klan.com, **[p]** 123Klan, 40 Avenue De Lassus, 59 320 Haubourdin, France.

Photography by 123klan



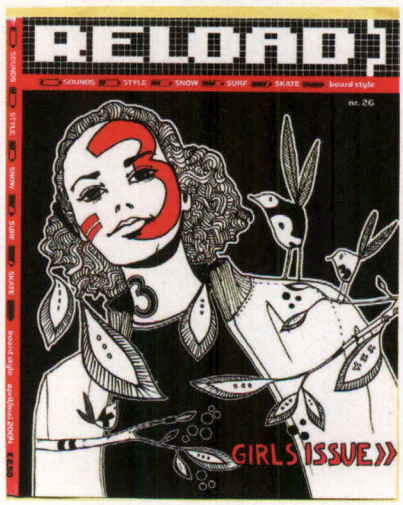


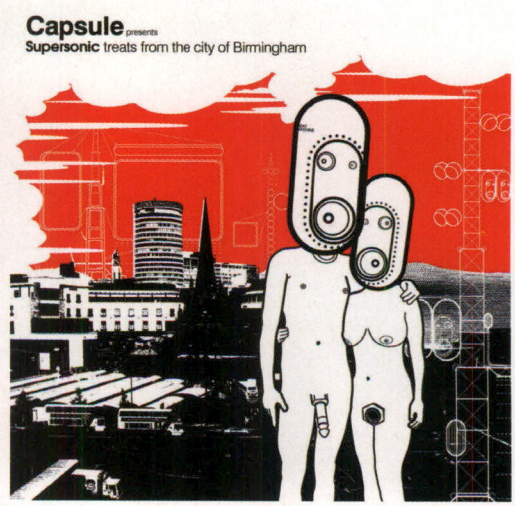


123klan work, from left to right:
Illustration featured in Australian magazine *Refill*.
Visuals realised for Hot Wheels T-shirt.
Cover design for Japanese magazine *CBC*.
Poster for *IDN*, exhibited at 'My Favourite Conference' in Singapore, 2004.

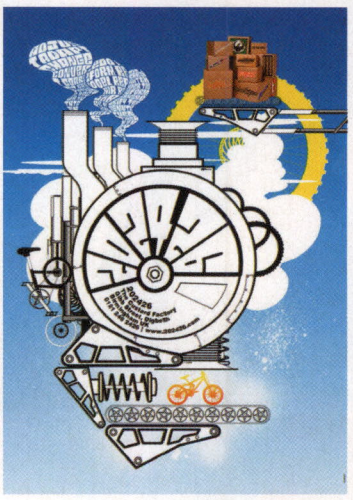
Beat13

When formed: The Beat13 website was built in 1999.
First job: Lucy: *Adrenalin* magazine. Matt: Gorillaz design team.
Clients to date: Carharrt, Smart Car, Gorillaz, Parlaphone, Magma, *The Guardian*, Kangol, Static Caravan, Supersonic festival, Sonic Arts Network, and more.
Mission statement: Art from the heart.
Office environment: The gallery space is a point of collaboration and inspiration for a city [Birmingham] barely visible on the artworld map.
Contact details: [w] www.beat13.co.uk, [e] info@beat13.co.uk.





Photography by Beat13



Above: Smart Car (marker pen on car door panel)
Left to right:
Cover for *Reload* magazine.
Flyer for Capsule project space.
Car painting for Kangol exhibition.
Flyer design.

START YOUR OWN
DESIGN BUSINESS
CLIENT BRIEF
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2 SUCCESS
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Setting up your own business

You've got the bleeding-edge graphics down to a tee, but can you run your own business? We show you how to get the ball rolling...

Not everyone starts their own design business straight out of university. But, if you are throwing off your mortar board, freelance work may be the only option that enables you to build up a portfolio and pay the bills until you're able to secure full-time work. However, many agency staff also find themselves coming full circle – disillusioned by working for other people, they set up their own businesses. Whatever your situation, this is a whole new world.

You need to be absolutely sure this is something you want to do. If you have friends who work for themselves, ask them what it's like. Do they miss the less-regular human contact? How hard is it to generate work? Also ask yourself why you're doing this – if you're simply having a bad day in the office, take a deep breath, give it a few weeks and if you still feel the same, then make plans to move on. And if your current workplace is the problem, don't confuse that with hating full-time employment – you might just be better off with another agency, in a slightly different position.

Also make sure you don't act rashly and shoot yourself in the foot. There's nothing worse than arrogantly walking out of your workplace, claiming to set the design world on fire with your own studio, only to come back a month later with your tail between your legs begging for freelance work. Similarly, it's probably not the best idea to try and poach clients from your current workplace. Instead, keep those valuable contacts open and maybe comment in passing that you're leaving the company to set up on your own. If your old clients liked your design work, but maybe had a problem with how the agency was run, they may be keen to seek you out in the future.

Of course, the best possible situation is to set up your first jobs before you leave full-time work. And if these lead to ongoing work, or 'knock-on' projects, you're definitely onto a winner.

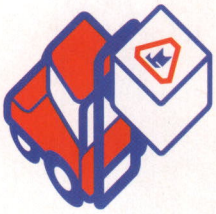
Location location location

So, you move out of the big, fancy studio with multiple, networked computers, table football and canteen into... what? Well, clearly, you won't be able to afford another studio like that all to yourself. The best solution is to start with a home work space. If you have the space, set aside a whole room. It will help if this is away from other distractions, so your work is kept separate from your personal life – a loft with all the office mod-cons would be perfect, although starting with computer, printer, necessary sockets and heating will do. Most clients will communicate with you via email and phone so it doesn't matter to them what your studio looks like, or where it is. If a client meeting is on the cards, offer to meet at their offices – it will look as though you're taking an active interest in their company and playing into their hands, when you're actually just keeping them away from the draughty, cramped utility room you're temporarily working from.

Some of the businesses 'creatively clustered' at the Custard Factory complex in Birmingham.

"A loft with all the office mod-cons would be perfect, although starting with computer, printer, necessary sockets and heating will do"

If anyone does need to meet at your work premises, make sure you're properly insured in case of their accidental injury. Officially, if you're using a room in your house for work, you may find you also need to pay business rates of some kind, but as long as you can prove it's not solely used for work, you're usually fine – keep a futon in the corner, for example, and the room doubles as a spare bedroom.



"The first rule of any business is to keep a record of everything, and when you're 100 per cent sure you won't need it any more, keep it anyway"

Chilworth Science Park, near Southampton, might not look much from up here, but it could be the communal office-space solution you're looking for.

Before using the room as your workspace, consider any redecorating that would help make the space feel more professional. Think about which colours you'll be most comfortable with, because you'll probably spend a lot of time twiddling your thumbs staring at those walls in the first few months of business. Posters and artwork can help cover gaps, and also inspire you on days of creative drought.

Before moving anything in too permanently, also consider whether you should relocate plug sockets and lighting, and whether specialist technology such as broadband needs installing – it will be easier to do any drilling and have workmen in before you move your work in. Put in shelves, cabinets and storage equipment as necessary. You'll soon find paperwork building up and if there's nowhere for it to go to, the resulting mess can affect your creative process.

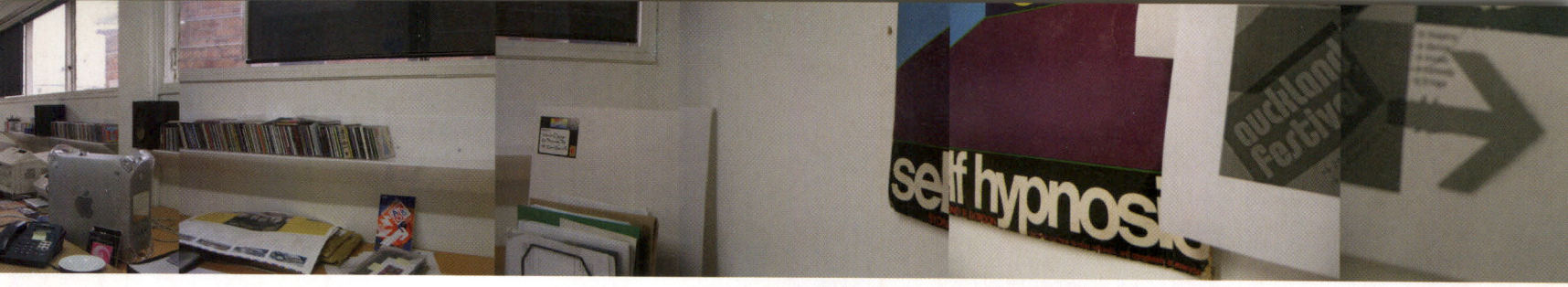
Advice and help

Depending on your geographical location, age and other circumstances, you'll find there are plenty of people encouraging you to start up in business. Cities such as London and Bristol are great places to set up, because they offer all the design community support, culture and 'extra-curricular' inspiration you might expect, but where design companies saturate any area, they may be missing out on other opportunities.

Many developing, regenerating areas such as Newcastle, Manchester and the West Midlands are actively encouraging 'creative clustering', the concept of designers, photographers, artists – in fact, people from any creative industry – working in close proximity as a community. So in effect, if a client needs work

List Jobs	Projects
Flash Simulation Game contact Apply via Freelancers.net date posted 29/9/2004 Milo Creative are looking for a talented freelance Flash designer for the production of an exciting simulation game for a major TV Broadcaster. The project will start October 2004. You should be passionate about interactive and visual design, have creative flair and pay high attention to detail, be a good team player, plan and manage your time effectively and have a good understanding of developing games in Flash. Software skills and design expertise in the following areas is essential: Graphic design & animation Interface & interaction design Navigation & architecture Typography skills Technical Knowledge: Flash MX with an understanding of ActionScript Illustrator / freehand Photoshop	A project is typi and often compl Click here to po PHP coding posted or website develo posted or ring tone webs posted or French and Ge posted or Flash Game posted or Copywriting posted or Creative posted or outsource deve posted or Linux administ posted or Floorplanning posted or Software Teste posted or

One of the many projects you can pitch for on [w] www.noagenciesplease.co.uk.



The offices of [w] www.inhousedesign.co.nz – all this could be yours in a few months' time.

A creative environment

Ten tips to getting your office space just right...

1. Paint the walls with one flat colour, so it's a blank canvas that can be covered as you choose.
2. Your chair is the throne of your design empire, so be prepared to spend a decent amount of money on comfort.
3. Place your monitor away from windows to avoid sun glare and damage to eyesight due to contrasting focal lengths.
4. Decide whether you'd rather keep a kettle and stocked fridge close at hand or prefer the 'break' of making a trip to the kitchen/shops...
5. Invest in a decent anglepoise desk lamp to cover the working area around your desk.
6. Keep warm, but not too warm – a cosy designer is not necessarily an active one!
7. Choose whether to position your desk against the wall, or as an 'island' in the middle of the room.
8. If clients are going to be coming to your office, make sure you have somewhere for them to sit.
9. Decorate your walls with poster works by your favourite designers – for example, [w] http://youworkforthem.com.
10. Most designers have particular music they like to work to. Discover which tunes gets your creative juices flowing.

Work chairs
Swivel chairs | Chairs | Stools | Benches
At IKEA you sit beautifully, comfortable and for a long time - even if it's rotating. The alternatives among our swivel chairs are vast with different materials, shapes and colours.
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swivel chair
£95.00
JOAKIM
swivel chair with
£95.00
PATRIK
swivel chair with castors
£110.00
JOEL
swivel chair with
£110.00

So many 'seating solutions' from ikea.com, but what's the right chair for you?

doing that would normally be tackled by a large, multi-discipline London agency, there's no reason why the clustered, smaller businesses couldn't rally together to offer the same service. That's not to say that if you already live in London, you should move into the sticks, but if you do think your current location is less than desirable, see what help is available before heading for the big smoke. We have listed a number of websites over the page that should be your first ports of call when making these enquiries.

Dealing with money

If you do go seeking advice from a company such as Business Link ([w] www.businesslink.gov.uk), they may also be able to point you in the right direction for information relating to tax, book-keeping and accounts (again, see our list of useful contacts on the next page). The first rule of any business is to keep a record of everything and when you're 100 per cent sure you won't need it any more, keep it anyway. Print off important emails, keep records of all contracts and copies of invoices for your own records, and file all your expenditures and receipts ready for your tax returns. If anyone asks for a piece of information, you should be able to find it immediately – whether it's the taxman, a project collaborator or the client themselves.

Also keep a record such as a spreadsheet file, showing what has been invoiced or paid and what needs chasing up. This will give you an advance idea of your earnings for the year so you can see if you're keeping to your targets. There are various office packages which make this kind of accounting easy – much of the work in

running a studio involves organisation and general management, but it's great if you can get a helping hand like this.

It also helps to anticipate the amount of work you'll be doing in a year, because this relates directly to how you set your standard daily/hourly rates and also how you quote for 'fixed price' design jobs. For example, if your work as a graphic designer would earn you £20,000 on a full-time contract, it would be desirable to earn the same when going solo. Now look at how often you'll be working in the first year – if you already have old contacts and jobs lined up, it may be as many as 200 days. So, £20,000 divided by 200 days works out at £100 per day. In actual fact, this would be a bit of a bargain for your client and, realistically, few people would generate that much work in their first year, so maybe £140–£180 is a better standard rate to go by. Then when your first clients ask you

You're not alone

Take advantage of the following resources...

www.j4b.co.uk – Use this site for quick and simple searches of the regularly updated database of business grants and loans.

www.princes-trust.org.uk – UK charity with funding opportunities for new businesses.

www.noagenciesplease.co.uk – A simple, effective site where clients put work out to tender and invite quotes from freelancers.

www.yayhooray.com – International web community of creative people. Get feedback on your work from other designers, find collaborators for complicated projects, troubleshoot technical queries.

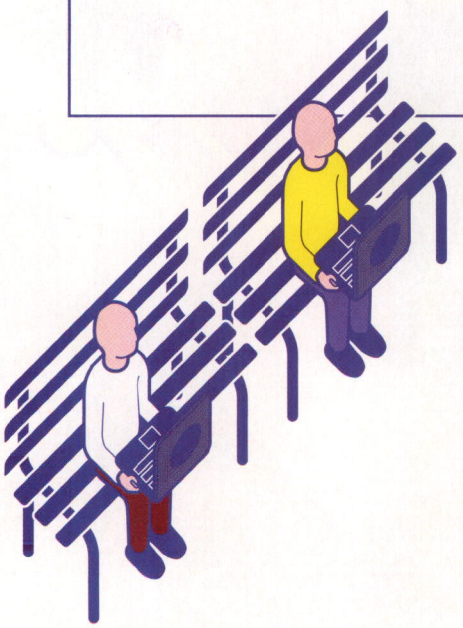
www.businesslink.gov.uk – UK government organisation with information about starting up, tax returns and how to contact a local advisor.

www.artscouncil.org.uk – The UK's national development agency for the arts, with information about funding opportunities.

www.youwhores.com – Off-the-wall listing site, enabling you to sell or buy any service via the web.

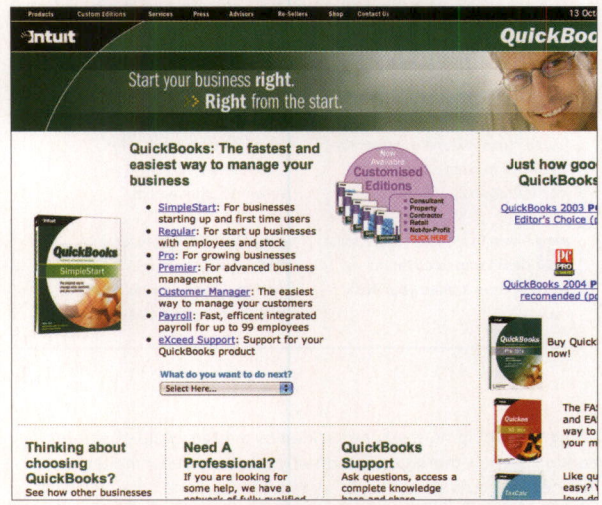
http://9rules.com/whitespace – Graphic design discussion site with plenty of articles and opinions bouncing around.

www.howdesign.com – Design portal accompanying the US's trusted design magazine, with links, features and job postings.



a service from metier
artsadvice
free course & career advice
about
industry background
funding
business guidance
apprenticeships & nvq
help me...
find a job
find a course
find funding
ask an advisor
need a more reliab
source of advice?
Our careers advisors are waiting to give you
artsadvice.
So email or call 0800 093 0444 now...
site map | links | advertise your course | email webmaster | terms & conditions | credits
Arts Advice © 2003 is brought to you by Metier & learndirect

[w] www.artsadvice.com offers advice and information for creative businesses, and that includes designers.


Intuit
QuickBoo
Start your business right.
Right from the start.
QuickBooks: The fastest and easiest way to manage your business
SimpleStart: For businesses starting up and first time users
Regular: For start up businesses with employees and stock
Pro: For growing businesses
Premier: For advanced business management
Customer Manager: The easiest way to manage your customers
Payroll: Fast, efficent integrated payroll for up to 99 employees
eXceed Support: Support for your QuickBooks product
Customised Editions
What do you want to do next?
Select Here...
Thinking about choosing QuickBooks?
See how other businesses
Need A Professional?
If you are looking for some help, we have a
QuickBooks Support
Ask questions, access a complete knowledge

www.quickbooks.co.uk – just one of many home-accounting software packages taking the fear out of number-crunching.

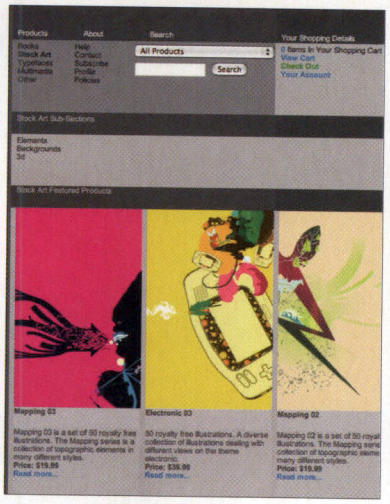
If this is what your spare room and office-to-be looks like, you might want to consider redecorating before moving in!

Case study

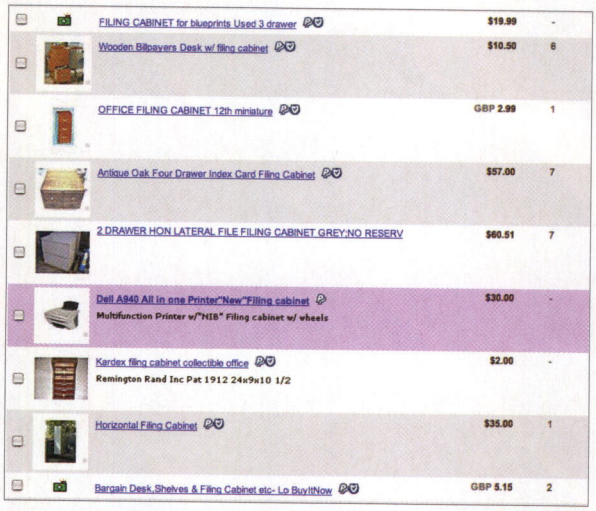
Here's one route to starting your design business...

Tom is a graphic designer living in West Bromwich, close to Birmingham. The area is primarily industrial and there are very few designers, so he considers moving into the city, discussing it with a Business Link representative ([w] www.businesslink.gov.uk). At the same time, he hears about local company The Public ([w] www.thepublic.com), and their 'creative industries' advisor offers Tom mentoring during the initial start-up period of his business.

Tom's flat has no room to set up an office, but he finds out about an initiative called SP/ARK at Wolverhampton Science Park ([w] www.wolverhamptonsp.co.uk) which offers cheap workspace alongside other creative companies. In the first few months of business, Tom also goes to a number of supportive events discovered via the local Metapod site ([w] www.metapod.com), including Black Country Chamber's ([w] www.bccbl.com) B2B Networking Breakfast, and an Arts + Media Training course on web design ([w] www.amtcc.org.uk). By the time Tom's business has really kicked off, he is exhibiting at the local Feed Me festival ([w] www.feedme.org.uk).



Buy some inspirational posters from [w] www.youworkforthem.com and then spend all day gazing at them instead of working.


FILING CABINET for blueprints Used 3 drawer $19.99 -
Wooden Billpayers Desk w/ filing cabinet $10.50 6
OFFICE FILING CABINET 12th miniature GBP 2.99 1
Antique Oak Four Drawer Index Card Filing Cabinet $57.00 7
2 DRAWER HON LATERAL FILE FILING CABINET GREY;NO RESERV $60.51 7
Dell A940 All in one Printer"New"Filing cabinet $30.00 -
Multifunction Printer w/"NIB" Filing cabinet w/ wheels
Kardex filing cabinet collectible office $2.00 -
Remington Rand Inc Pat 1912 24x9x10 1/2
Horizontal Filing Cabinet $35.00 1
Bargain Desk,Shelves & Filing Cabinet etc- Lo BuyItNow GBP 5.15 2

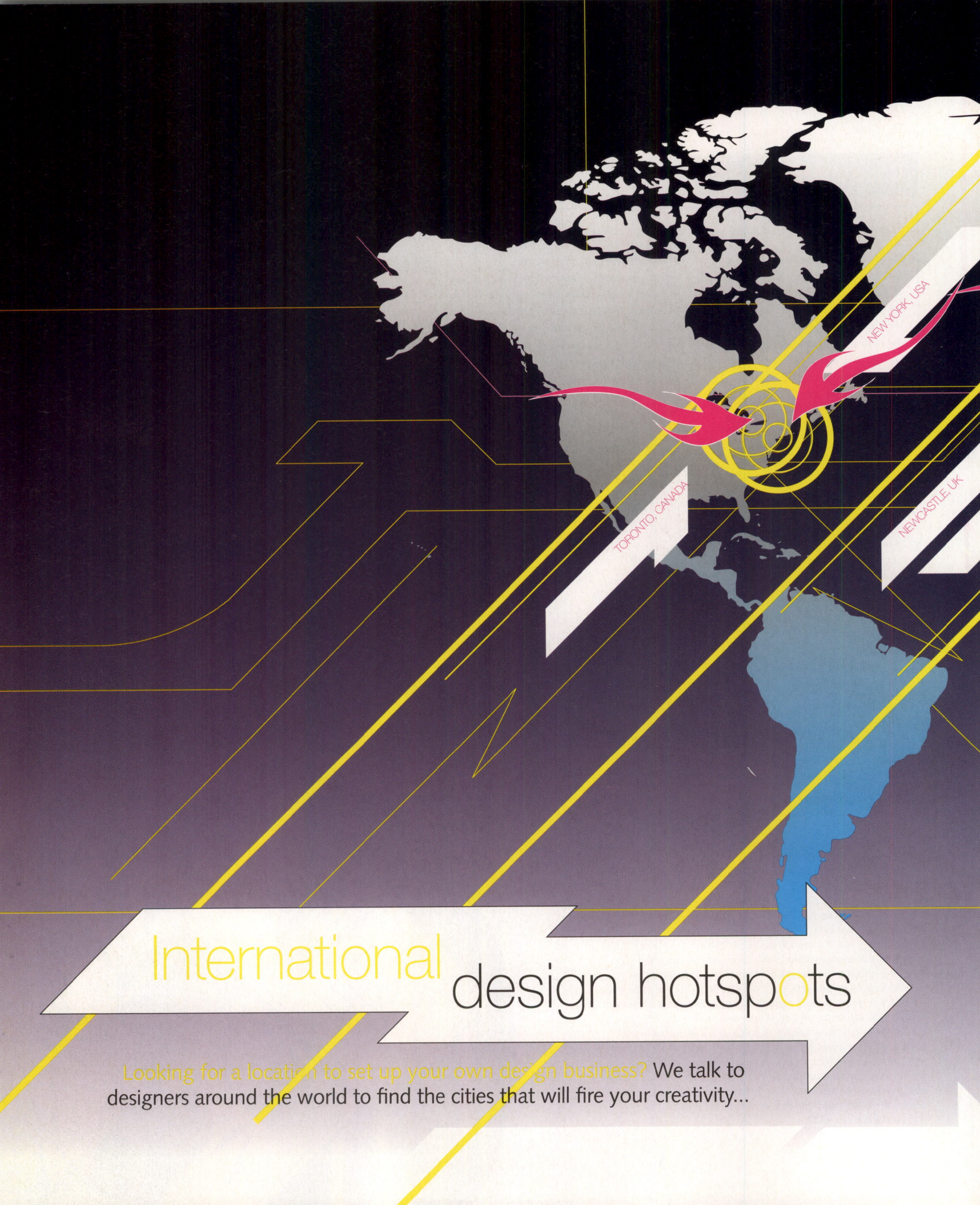
Budget office furniture – ebay.com could be the cheapest way to kit out your office.

to quote, simply work out how many days the job will take and multiply by your daily rate.

Of course, starting a design business is the easy part. The tricky bit is keeping it going past the first few months, or even years, as you gradually build a portfolio and stable of impressive clients who are likely to come back to you for repeat work. This can be frustrating to start with. It's a little like the chicken and egg conundrum — which comes first, the portfolio or the clients? If you start with a decent portfolio (maybe one you built up while studying), this may be enough to interest clients, especially if you're looking to work on projects that closely reflect your previous work.

Even with your portfolio beautifully presented, most of your work to start with will be in promoting your new design service, seeking out potential clients, emailing, phoning, and lots of chasing up. No one ever got anywhere waiting for clients to get back to them – you can, of course, go too far with this, but it would take a lot for someone to put out a restraining order on you, and most of the time you'll find they've just been busy. They will be happy to talk to you, especially when they hear what an incredible new business it is you've started. ca-p

"It would take a lot for someone to put out a restraining order on you, and most of the time you'll find they've just been busy"



International design hotspots

Looking for a location to set up your own design business? We talk to designers around the world to find the cities that will fire your creativity...

STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN
TOKYO, JAPAN
illustration : johann
AUCKLAND, NZ
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

New York, USA

NY online: **www.flashforward2004.com** (design conferences), **www.h1base.com** (visa information)

Most US designers would agree that New York is the cultural capital of America. "NYC is the centre for arts, media, and corporations, which means the concentration of demand for design services is great, as is the possibility of landing interesting projects," says Anh Tuan Pham of design studio **[w] www.forofficeuseonly.com.**

However, with so many companies already established, new arrivals may find it a challenge, as Jonathan Kenyon, Graphic Designer at **[w] www.vault49.com**, explains: "The difficulty is actually in getting into the country, not setting up a business. There is no specific encouragement for designers, and it's necessary to arrive with your own motivation. US federal and local government initiatives do not recognise the need for foreign influence in design." So before you jump on the plane with your laptop in tow, make sure you've checked out the visa situation first.

Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK

Newcastle online: **www.pne.org, www.businesslink.gov.uk** (local business advice), **www.balticmill.com** (contemporary arts centre)

Newcastle is an up-and-coming area in terms of design and creativity, particularly the quayside area, which has the Baltic arts centre and Sage music centre," explains Geoff Biskupek, Creative Director of **[w] www.fuse-media.co.uk**. "Government funding has allowed a design community to develop through an area of workspaces in close proximity, about 90 per cent catering for design or creative-led businesses."

And as more designers set up shop, the local culture also starts to lean in that direction, as Jim Richardson, Creative Director at **[w] www.sumodesign.co.uk**, discovered. "We have a local design association called 'A'. It brings speakers such as Wally Olins, Max Kisman and Simon Sankaraya to the region, and also encourages businesses to invest in design. At the minute, there is an exhibition of the best in world poster design at a local gallery, so graphic design is starting to get into the mainstream."

Stockholm, Sweden

Stockholm online: **www.swedezine.net, www.threeoh.com** (design portals), **www.acne.se, www.ytterborn-fuentes.com, www.stockholmdesignlab.se, www.fb.se, www.rithuset.se, www.starring.se, www.farfar.se** (design agencies)

Armin Osmancevic is Co-founder of WERK (**[w] www.werk.se**), a designer and illustrator's collective in Stockholm. "There are all kinds of studios and locations and the prices are variable. We at WERK rent a very small place downtown which is 22 square metres and costs 250 Euros per month."

Illustrator and designer Jerker Sojdelius (**[w] www.houdini.se**) adds: "Broadband is affordable but not exactly cheap: around £30 a month. Wireless is spreading across the city and public access zones are being set up. Since Sweden has been very much at the forefront of IT development, the infrastructure is well-suited for 'wired' professionals, even though the dot com boom is long gone."

What kind of design community can new companies expect to find? "Swedes have a tradition of getting organised and taking part in communal activities, associations and clubs," says Sojdelius, "but at the same time Swedes are a private lot and don't really mingle that much."

Berlin, Germany

Berlin online: **www.die-gestalten.de** (design book publisher), **www.eboy.de, www.fork.de, www.neubauberlin.com, www.pfadfinderei.com** (design agencies), **www.pictoplasma.com, www.graficeurope.com** (events)

Anyone starting out in Berlin can expect plenty of inspiration. Paul Wagner, Multimedia Designer at **[w] www.tenmetal.com** enthusiastically lists the benefits: "Personal freedom and lots of space. General unspoken agreement in the denial of rules. Unpretentious improvised everyday culture. Clublife. Artscene. Constant change. So, if you manage not to be distracted by the temptations of a neverending night out, you'll be fine."

Living costs are also attractive. "The cost of living is low compared to any other relevant capital in Europe, which is maybe the number one feature here in Berlin. There are still lots of loft spaces to rent – such as a 250-square-metre loft for about Đ1,500-2,000 a month."

Markus Wente, Graphic Designer at **[w] www.52nord.de** explains how the design community works together in Berlin. "Lots of people know each other because they worked together in big agencies," says Marcus. "After the new economy crash, they started their own businesses and often work together as freelancers... so did we."

Sydney, Australia

Sydney online: **www.immi.gov.au** (visa info), **http://forums.australianinfront.com.au** (local design forum), **www.animallogic.com, www.mesh22.com, www.fluoro.com.au, www.feeder.com.au** (local agencies)

"Good weather, ten minutes from the beach – it's an international city, but without international expenses, as in New York or London," summarises Ash Bolland, Director/Designer at **[w] www.umeric.com**. "It was easy for us because we came from New Zealand, and leasing a space is pretty straightforward. There are some good people here. The economy is strong. I know there are a few small business grants, and so on, but you have to be an Australian citizen."

However, all these benefits don't come cheap for creatives living there. "It's expensive," says Paul Casey, a local Art Director at **[w] www.paulcasey.net**. "Although not as expensive as London, Paris, New York and Tokyo, Sydney is the most expensive city in which to live in Australia. You can expect to pay A$220 per week for a modest inner city single-bedroom apartment. A small studio (60 square metres) can range from $300 upwards."

Toronto, Canada

Toronto online: **www.dx.org/digifest, www.flashinthecan.com, www.flashinto.com** (events and networking), **www.ryanwolman.com, www.indusblue.com, www.johngodfrey.net** (designers)

"The city is very community-oriented when it comes to design and the arts," says Jody Poole, Creative Director at **[w] www.3am-design.com**. "It seems everyone is willing to help out everyone else. There's everything from workshops for new directors to technology-specific workgroups to online magazines, the members of which meet for drinks/seminars once a month – flashinTO is a great one." Not to mention Flash in the Can Festival and Digifest.

So what's to stop us all setting up our design business in Toronto then? "Work visas are difficult to get," says Michael Farley, a local *Flash* developer (**[w] www.michaelfarley.net**), "especially if you're looking to open a company. It's not a cheap city, but everything can be worked around to get off the ground. Red tape is minimal, and overall, it's quite easy to get the business started. Getting it to be successful is another story though."

Auckland, New Zealand

Auckland online: **www.dinz.org.nz** (designers institute), **www.forthemasses.net** (design portal)

If you're looking for a location that offers fresh air away from the studio every so often, New Zealand could be the answer. Surprisingly, all that nature isn't reflected in local design styles. "We have a lot of colour, nature everywhere, and the design ethic quite often works in contrast," says Matthew Allen of **[w] www.mata.co.nz**. "Minimal, industrial, greys and sharp lines can be popular here – that's one side. Organic, graffiti and urban pacific design is also very strong in Auckland."

Auckland's location within New Zealand helps too. "Auckland is the business capital of New Zealand," explains Gideon Keith, Graphic Designer at **[w] www.seven.co.nz**. "Most local companies are well represented here and generally head offices are here." And the visa situation is also still relatively welcoming to new businesses: "Work visa and residency criteria is becoming harder to achieve and is based on a points system. However, despite there being an abundance of designers, they are on the desired profession list."

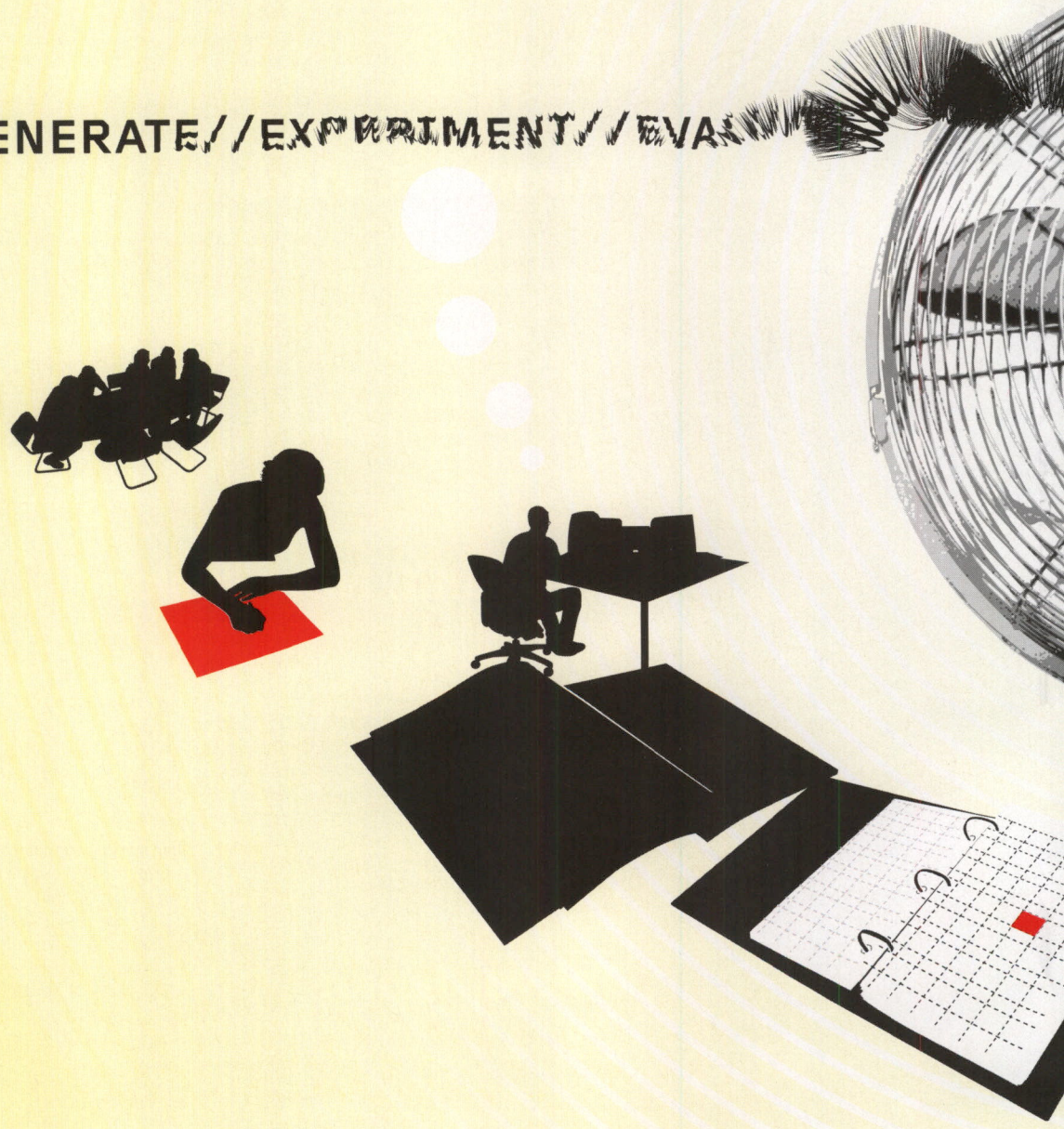
Tokyo, Japan

Tokyo online: **www.shift.jp.org, www.jagda.org** (resources), **www.asyl.co.jp, www.gandd.co.jp, www.butterfly-stroke.com** (designers)

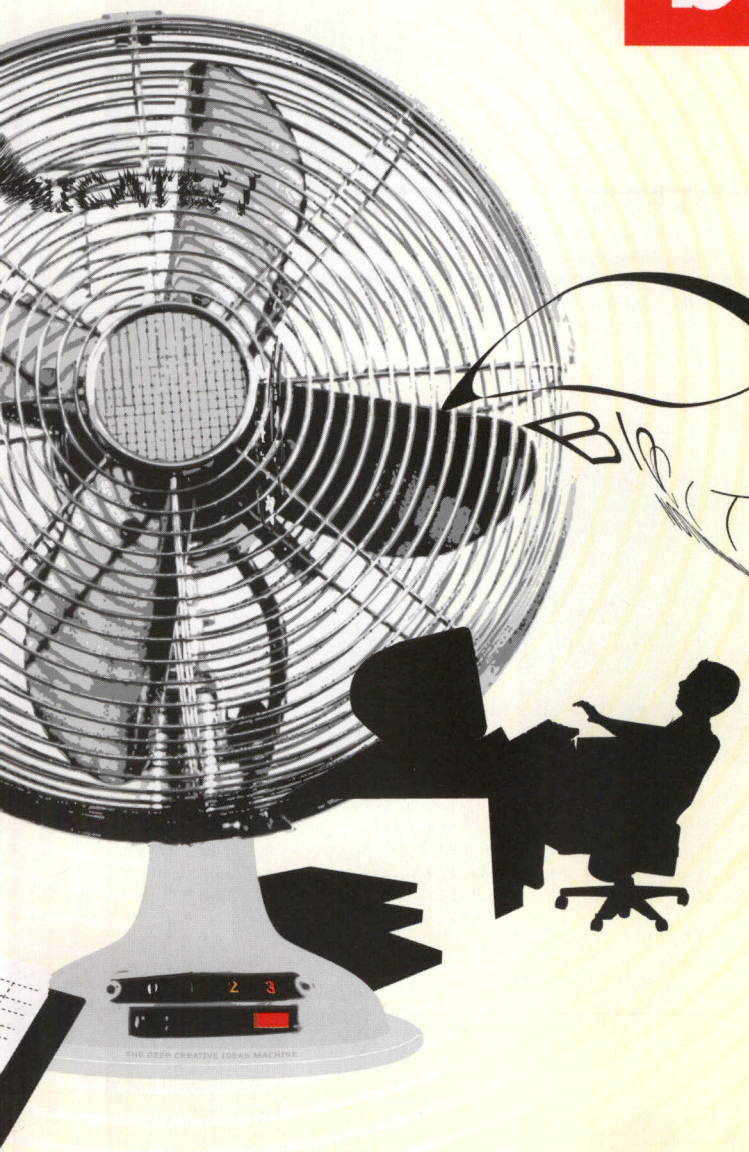
Graphically, Tokyo is probably one of the most 'different' locations you could relocate to – especially for typographers. Graphic Designer Omar Rodriguez of **[w] www.invassive.com** is quick to mention the "completely new set of communication symbols compared with western countries" and also, typically, the "cheap technology (digital cameras, and lots of gadgets), cheap internet and free internet at bars."

Studio space can be pricey but Rodriguez explains how the Japanese 'business model' can mean this isn't always relevant. "Rent space is really expensive, especially in the city centre. However, the key for business success in Japan lies in establishing a good network of contacts and a good relationship with your clients. Working space isn't necessarily important, considering that you might get your client to hire your services after singing all night at a karaoke bar." Forget the design course then, you'll be better off taking some singing lessons instead. ca-p

IDEAS//GENERATE//EXPERIMENT//EVA



Creating a brand identity



So, you've formed a new company and need an identity. Deep Creative shows you how to create one from concept to final artwork...

When starting any company, your brand is of vital importance. Think of the world's leading brands such as Nike or Apple – you don't even have to see any words with the logo to know what the company is. While you may be way off achieving this kind of global status, you should still envisage a logo that is recognisable, simple and reflects your company values. In this tutorial, Deep Creative shows you how to create an exciting original corporate identity, basing the final logo on a well-informed, well-scrutinised process of experimentation and consultation.

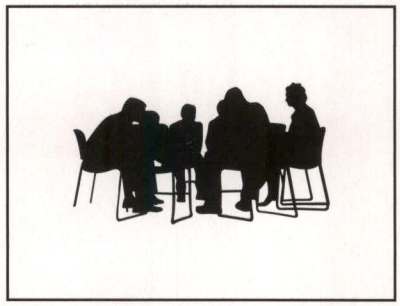
The following tutorial will also be useful if you're designing a logo for a client. You must, for instance, know your client's needs, and the market they are competing in. You must also know your target demographic.

It's important to make sure the branding visually reflects the brand values it represents – stick to these values and excite the target demographic with your mark. Finally, you must make your brand look the same everywhere in every size on every format. It's a tricky job, but after this tutorial, you'll be heading in the right direction.

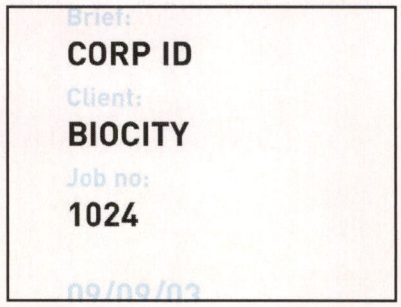
Expertise provided by Dominic James of Deep Creative. Deep Creative has recently celebrated its seventh anniversary and continues to provide brand solutions for companies all over the world. Contact Dom on **[e]** dom@deep.co.uk or **[w]** www.deep.co.uk.

Part 1: Briefing and inspiration

The first step in logo design is about coming up with ideas...

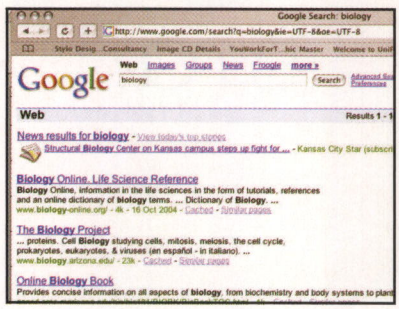


1 The first thing to do is think about what you want out of your logo. You must be confident that you understand what's required. Make clear notes, ask lots of questions and type them up to present to your creative team (if you have one) while it's all fresh in your mind.



2 Here's our list of must-haves: key words, brand values, brand history and knowledge, brand goals, target market demographic, social responsibility implications, longevity of brand image (that is, is this logo to last more, or less, than five years?).

3 Do your research. Although you have tight deadlines, allocating quality time for a well-informed and broad range of research is fundamental to the success of the new brand in its marketplace. It's important to know this market visually, to be able to approach the project tactfully.

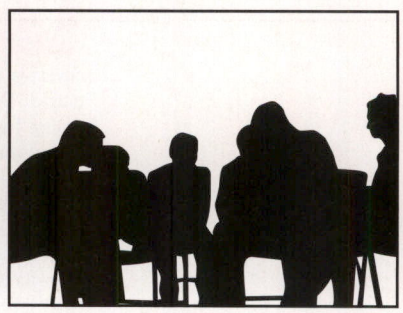


4 The internet is the most convenient and obvious method of research now. Visit competitors' websites and use Google to search any subject around your brand. Find strong and sometimes unusual links that can equip you with powerful, unique tools when it comes to generating new ideas.

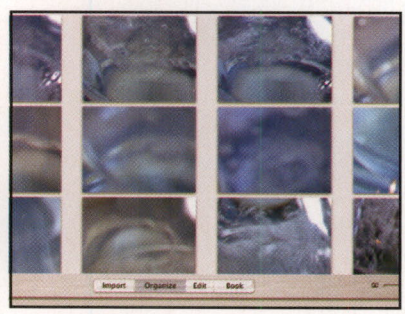
5 Collate brochures, folders, industry magazines; visit exhibitions, shops; take pictures of your target consumers to understand their values, habits and level of communication. Create a profile that will help design the right feel for the brand.

6 Take notes and sketch ideas, word plays, shapes, colours... any visual ideas that the research initially triggers. Collate textures, colours, objects, and any other visuals that could be shared with peers, seniors and the client. These are the beginnings of your brand profile.

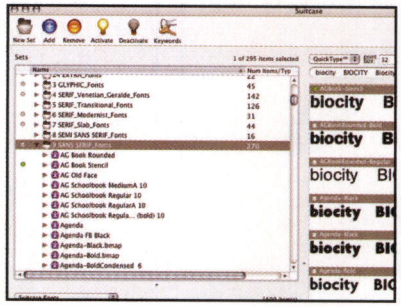
7 Gather all of the material together for review. Create mood boards, stick your ideas up on the walls, constantly analysing new concepts. This stage should be active in order to generate creative, original successful solutions.



8 Review with your team. You should now have ideas of colours, textures, themes and word plays which start to create a 'feel'. How appropriate to the brand is that feel? Get early feedback from others. Listen and take action on their instincts. Collate and concentrate on the strongest ideas.

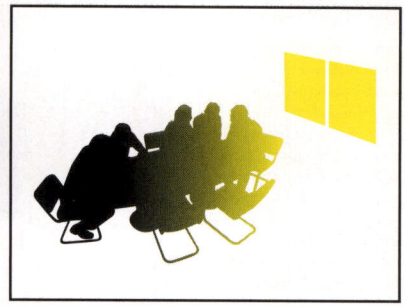


9 Experiment with some of the ideas you've had. Explore new methods – anything that creates unpredictable results. Look for inspiration everywhere and anywhere.



10 Spend time looking through typefaces, logo fonts and letterforms which may fulfil your requirements. There are many fonts for many purposes. Try websites, books and font utilities to source these.

11 Certain typographic elements, shapes, images, patterns and colours will start to work. Building ideas in *Illustrator* with the Pen tools will help refine and make your marks more physically editable.



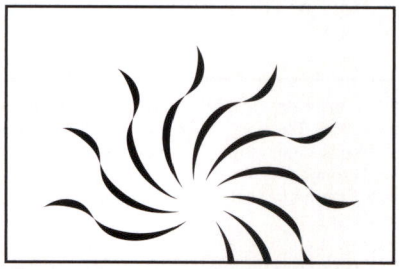
12 Combining these simple ideas with the mood boards, the client can get a feel for the directions that you have created for them. There may be more than ten ideas at this stage that are all varied, experimental and sophisticated.

Part 2: Generating marks

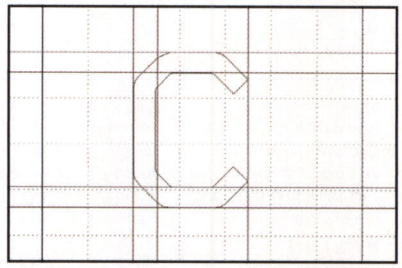
Start to play around with logo ideas in *Illustrator*...

Perfect curves

It's essential to check any curves you've used are smooth. Turn your view to outline in *Illustrator*. Select the Pen tool (P), press the Ctrl/Cmnd key and click on the point you want to adjust. Change your Pen tool to the Convert Anchor Point tool by holding down the Alt key and dragging out the handles. This gives you a smooth curve with handles that are of an even length.



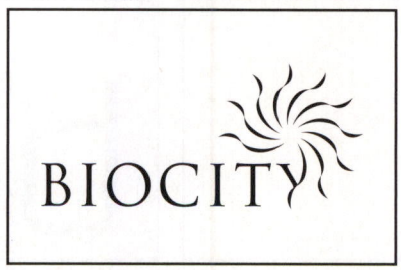
1 Begin to generate logos from the feedback. You should now know the direction you need to go in to satisfy your needs and achieve creative results. Take these ideas further. Start to create black logos in *Illustrator*. Keep them to a user-friendly size.



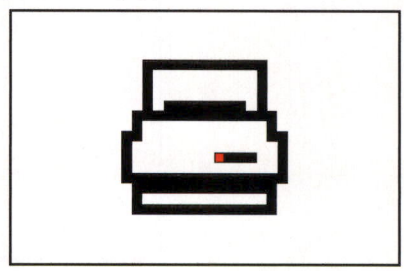
2 In *Illustrator*, create outlines of any fonts that you're using, and begin to make this a bespoke typographic mark using the Pen tools. Tailor the font's weight and curves so that a balanced individual strong mark is formed.

3 Use the rulers, guides and grid to create accurate curves and balanced spacing. Also use the Transform tool to work on the mark using accurate dimensions.

4 Remain active. Be aggressive with the results. Duplicate ideas, make them bolder/finer, apply curves and extend ascenders. There are always ways to change your mark, but use your instinct to leave it when it reaches its strongest form (this may even be the first edition).



5 Each logo should be comparable by the same size and colour. They can then be judged on there own strengths of form as a logo: spacing, weight, tactfulness. The overall feel and originality can be quickly assessed this way by your team members and yourself.



6 Constantly print out these ideas, because this is the best way to assess their physical success. Look at them from a distance, stick them on the wall, show them to people – this logo has a purpose which it should fulfil.

Brand consistency

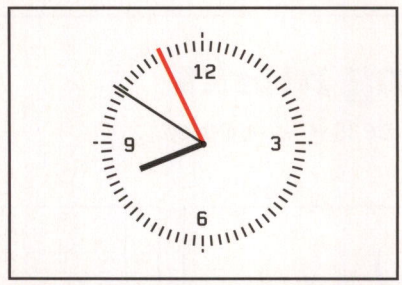
Maintaining brand consistency is fundamental for the strength and effectiveness of the brand. You have given a client a unique brand identity – a strict set of corporate guidelines that are almost as important as the mark itself. Use *Illustrator* to measure out grids that show acceptable spatial relationships and use of the logo. Create PDF documents from this that can be sent to every user of the logo via email.

7 Group feedback enables you to critically assess what you have created, and how it's communicating. Stick all the logos up on the wall for everyone to see. Which ones stands out to the eye? Which is most legible? Which is most exciting? Memorable, individual, appropriate? Or is it back to the drawing board?

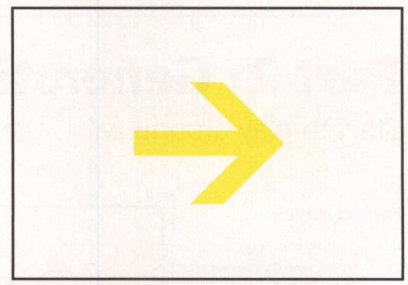
8 For the three most successful marks, take these on a stage further. They work, but how can they represent a brand that is stronger/more friendly/more professional?

9 Colour is as important as the mark in many ways. Colour alone can represent a brand if used in an original context. You should find this is something that should be a natural progression – whatever inspired and dictated the form should also inspire the colour.

10 Now collate these marks in *Illustrator* for a printed presentation. Use a colour version, a large version and the standard size in black (at which it has been designed). Colours should be considered too. Because this is still about form, you may find colours that work in one mark that can later be applied to other marks.



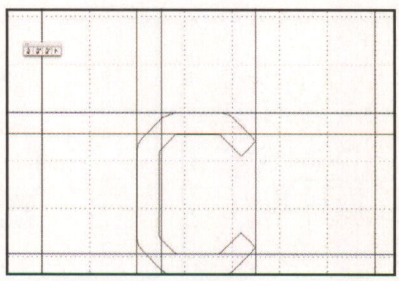
11 Ideally, you should show these ideas to others in your field and/or company. This is something you and they will look at everyday, possibly for years to come. How will they feel about this in the morning? How will they perceive these marks in their work surroundings?



12 Think about how you can optomise colour use. How do you now see the logo against your competitors? Does it need to be bolder or more refined? These are two questions you may find relevant.

Part 3: Robust logo

Perfect your logo and prepare it for use on different formats…



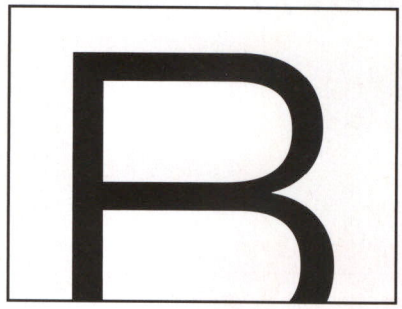
1 Scrutinise your artwork. Thoroughly check any curves and shapes that are used. There should be no stray points, uneven edges or imperfect curves. Use the preview (outline) in *Illustrator* to inspect the edges in detail. This will also show up any stray vectors.

2 Any line strokes that you've used should be converted to outlines so that this mark is scalable. Any fonts should also be outlined so that this logo can be universally exported.

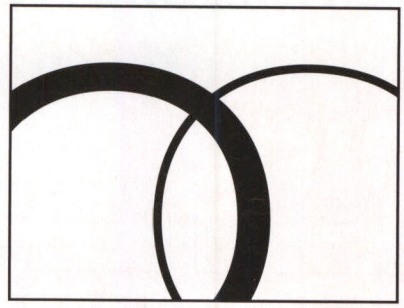
3 Use *Illustrator* to combine shapes using the Compound Paths command – or the Pathfinder tool, which enables you to merge paths and have full control of one single area.

Typographic awareness

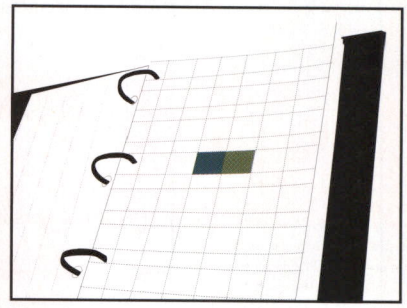
If you've discovered an intriguing font in your research and would like to find out what it is to reincarnate it for your branding, you can scan it and fax/email it to [w] www.fontshop.com. These guys will search their enormous databases and source it for you. Finding the perfect typographic solution is very important.



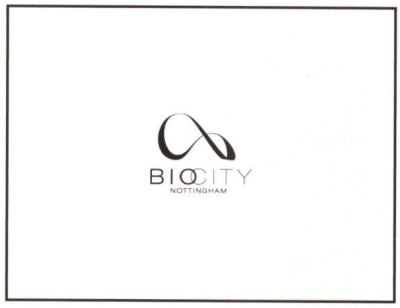
4 Print the logo as big as possible in black. Your eye will easily pick up any weaknesses or imperfections with this proofing technique.



5 Show this final version to anyone who is fresh to this mark. Do they see any problems that you can't?

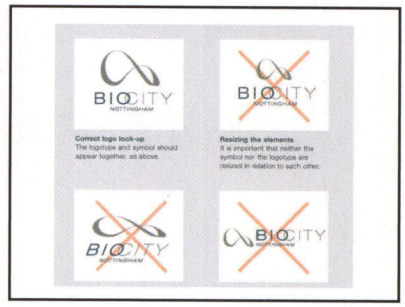


6 Now create final colour versions. Create CMYK, Pantone and web versions for its many different uses.

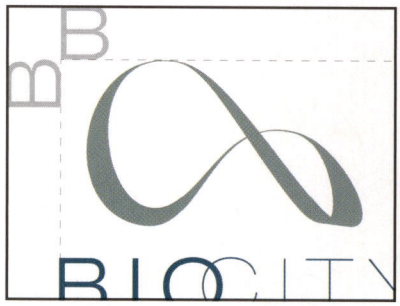


7 It may be necessary to create a small version (especially if fine strokes are used) which is as legible as the designed format. A large version may also be necessary. But make sure these are used to make the logo look the same, because it's very important to retain a high level of consistency with successful branding.

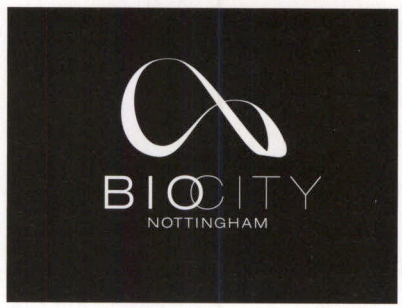
8 You might need a version that's just the emblem and one that's just the typographical element, for use on different formats.


BIOCITY
NOTTINGHAM
Correct logo lock-up
The logotype and symbol should appear together, as above.
Resizing the elements
It is important that neither the symbol nor the logotype are resized in relation to each other.

9 Begin creating a corporate guide, with all of the brand's values incorporated. Strict guidelines for colour and sizes should be set out here to retain brand consistency.



10 Consider how much space the logo needs around it to breathe. Set a distance around the mark to maintain its identity – so users can't penetrate this space.

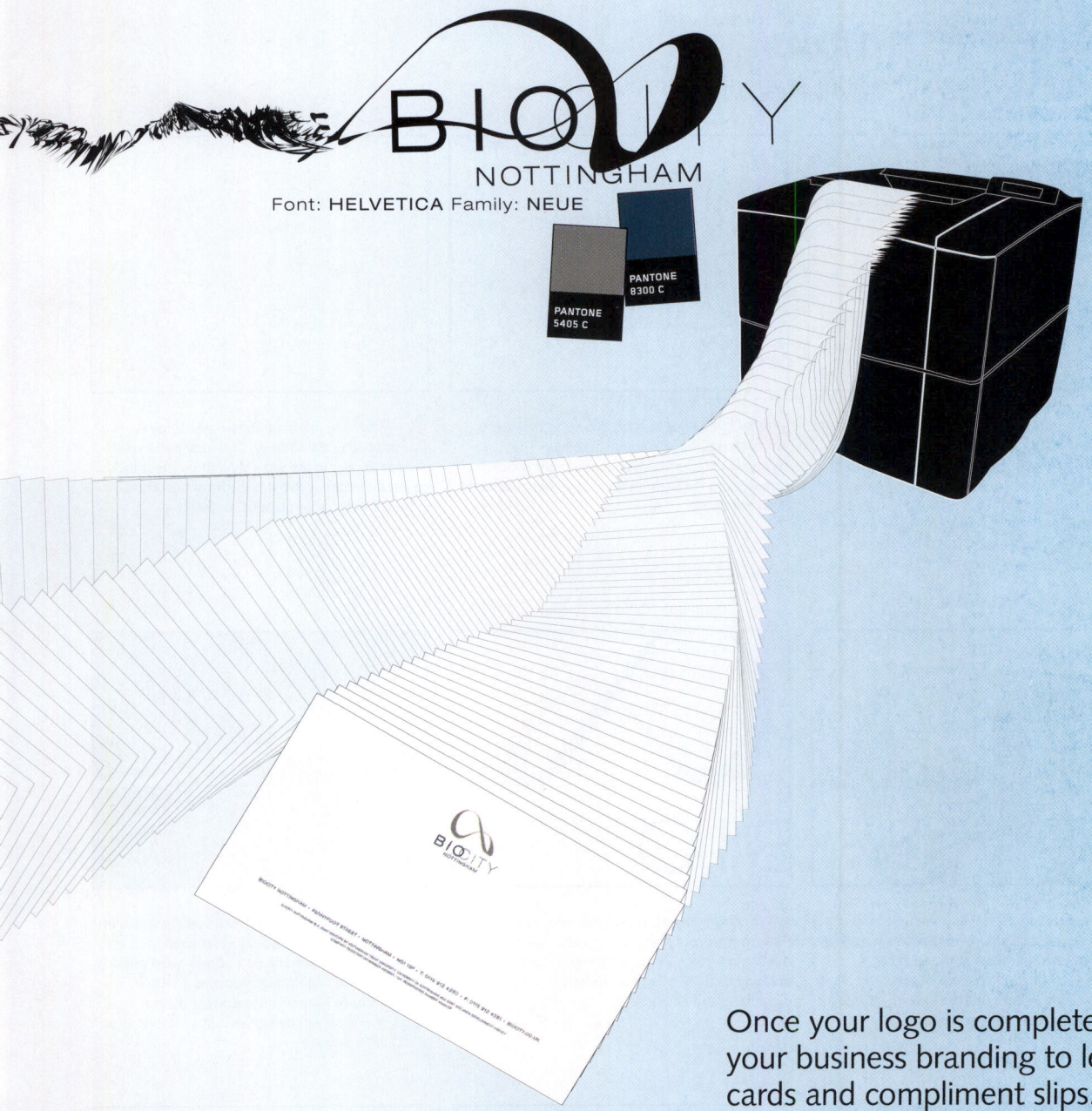


11 How should this logo be used on black? On white? How is it used on imagery? Can it be used over imagery? Ensure you have every situation covered.

12 After all your hard work, there's only one thing left to do: assess the finished identity as successful! ca▸p

CONSISTENT//FUNCTIONAL//LEGIBLE//

Designing stationery



Once your logo is complete, you can extend your business branding to letterheads, business cards and compliment slips...

Stationery is a fundamental process of successful branding. It provides consistent, legible solutions for use on a day-to-day basis and gives you the responsibility and opportunity to demonstrate tactful skill. The target should be to build the brand while creating something that's memorable and unique. This process also requires the knowledge and experience of using effective materials and printing processes.

Applying the corporate mark should be something that is instinctive and informed through the process of branding. Letting the logo breathe and taking forward the most successful elements of this mark should combine to create strong brand-building material. Hierarchy of information is also something that's of paramount importance, because this is your company or your client's initial means of communication.

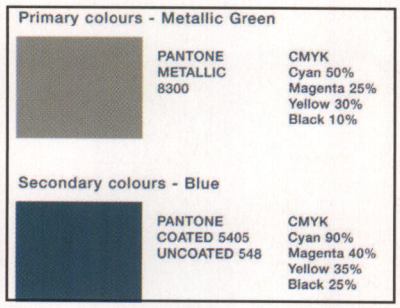
Expertise provided Dominic James of Deep Creative. Deep Creative has recently celebrated its seventh anniversary and continues to provide brand solutions for companies all over the world. Contact Dom on **[e]** dom@deep.co.uk or **[w]** www.deep.co.uk.

Part 1: Building the brand

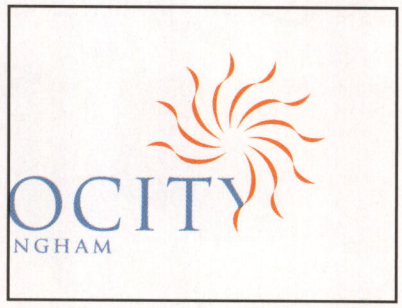
Decide how to incorporate your logo into your stationery products...

Choosing paper

Try to use the same stock throughout all your stationery, because this is as much a part of the brand as the colour and mark. There are lots of options when choosing papers/cards/plastics. Does it suit your brand to use a gloss, matt, or even a rubber-coated paper? Find out how well you can print on these and how durable they are – these are your most important considerations.

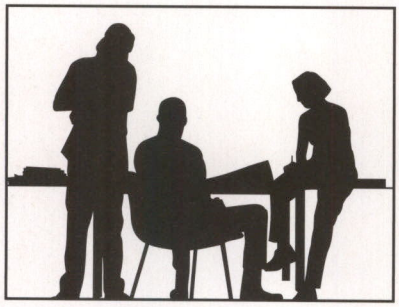

Primary colours - Metallic Green
PANTONE METALLIC 8300
CMYK Cyan 50% Magenta 25% Yellow 30% Black 10%
Secondary colours - Blue
PANTONE COATED 5405 UNCOATED 548
CMYK Cyan 90% Magenta 40% Yellow 35% Black 25%

1 You've created branding that's likely to have implied colour treatments and typographic elements. Combine this with what you like most, and what works best about the branding. Also, if you came across any ideas in research and mood boards that would enhance the corporate image, bring them back to the fore. Use the stationery to tie these elements together.

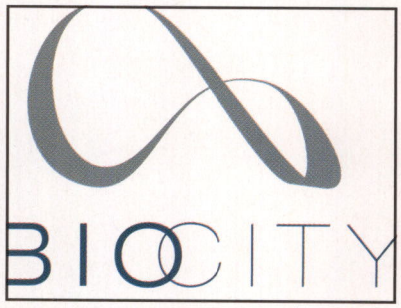


2 Be careful not to start introducing elements which distract from the branding. The corporate colours and typographic style should complement the logo on these stationery elements. Build the brand.

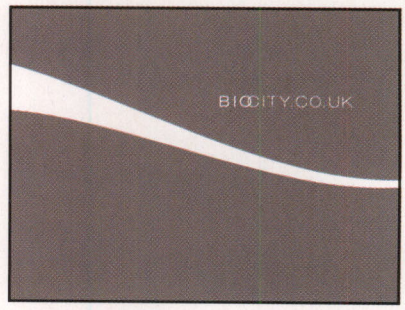
3 Collate the information that needs to be applied to the formats. This information will need to appear in the same style throughout the corporate material. What is the most important information for your point of contact?



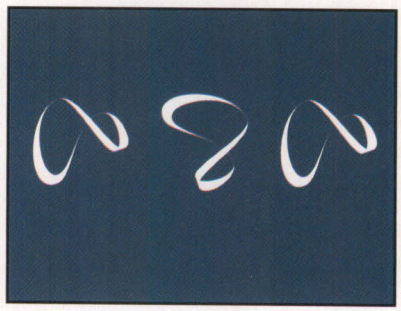
4 Think about your company's requirements, with samples or materials from a paper stockist. Think about how the material should feel, considering how luxurious or eco-friendly the brand is. Follow this up with quotations, taking paper weight and quantities into account.



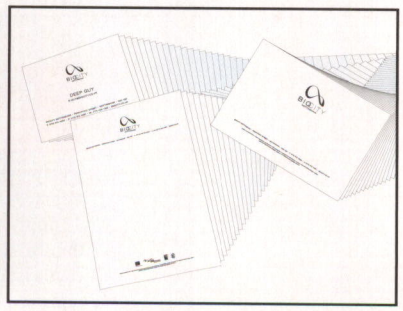
5 Consider any other budget issues early on. This could provide opportunities to take the brand further, through the use of special finishing techniques such as spot varnishes, die-cutting and embossing.



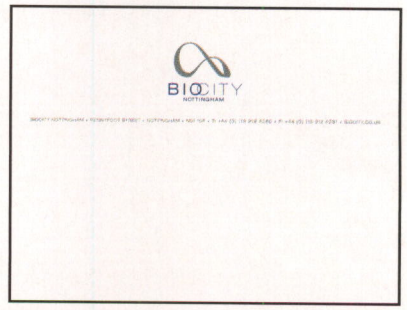
6 If possible, print on both sides of the stationery. Carefully break down the information to be presented. Make sure the cost of two-sided printing is justified with well-thought-out design. Web addresses have become an important part of branding and should be included (if available) as an initial call to action.



7 Use space, colour and possible complementary imagery to build the brand through the stationery. Collect your ideas together in *Illustrator*, and prepare different styles with consistent use of the information. Explore ways to enhance the logo through positioning and orientation.



8 Determine all the formats that need to be designed. Consider business card/letterhead info and orientation, and how this can be applied to compliment slips and envelopes accordingly. For letterheads, you need to take into account faxing (no light colours), envelope windows (position of address) and folding.



9 Stationery should be of a functional design. These elements should be kept as user-friendly as possible.

Part 2: Consistent, legible and functional

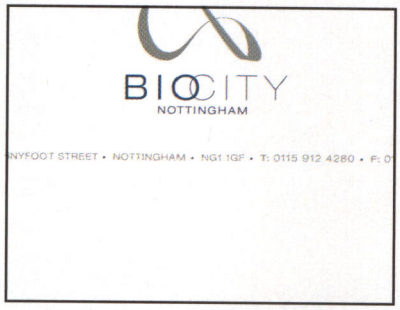
Be consistent when using your logo and letterhead information for other branded materials...

Business cards that last

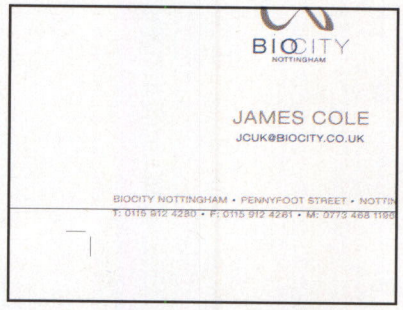
Choose a heavyweight stock for your business card – ideally from 180gsm upwards. Make sure that the card is sealed after printing so it's more likely to withstand wear and tear.

Using special finishes

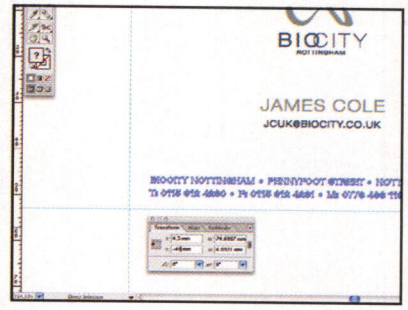
Take the brand a stage further by applying extra qualities. The use of spot gloss, embossing and die-cutting can enhance the material, if done sensitively. Use *Illustrator* to create extra swatches and layers, which will act as tags to indicate these separate inks to the printer.



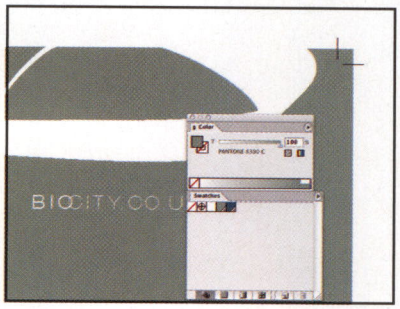
1 Text size, weight and colour determine legibility. It may be useful to test out sizes and preview this before you get too far into the design process. Do you know how old your target market is for instance? You may need to increase the font size to accommodate such needs.



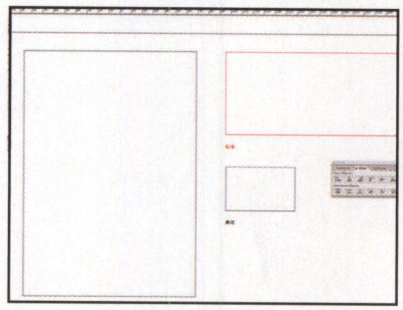
2 Type is generally legible down to a minimum of around 5pt, especially when bold. One typographic trick that keeps the information clean and flowing is to reduce the size of any numerical characters in size to line up the vertical heights of the digits. Draw a guide across the top of the text to measure this.



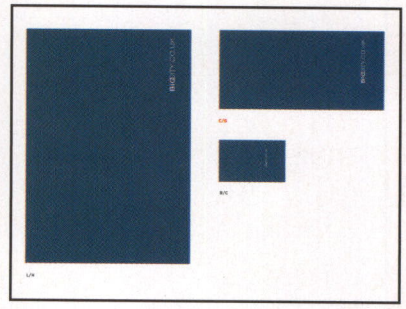
3 Use the Transform tool to preset margins around the type area (these are the spaces that ensure all type is printed cleanly onto the stationery and not roaming towards the edge). These margins help the identity to breathe, and can be applied throughout other branded material.



4 If you're not using CMYK images (which are generally cumbersome on stationery) you'll find working with Pantones minimises cost and maximises print quality. You (or your client) will appreciate this where very small typography is used.

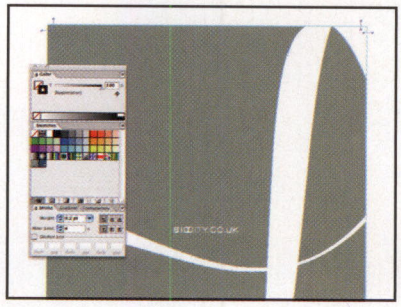


5 Set up a document in *Illustrator*, with outlines for both sides of all formats (compliment slips, letterheads, business cards and envelopes) to use as templates. Style the info onto the elements using the corporate fonts. Don't forget that it is a legal requirement to print the VAT registered office no. on the letterhead (if you're VAT registered, that is).

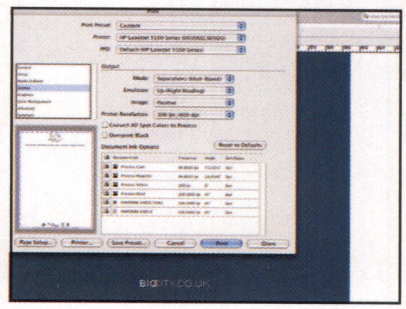


6 Try to arrange the graphics in a way that might make someone look twice at the page. The page may look slimmer if you change the orientation of the graphics – up the side, for instance.

7 Once you have a final idea, you need to prepare the artwork for the printer. Any fonts must be collected or turned to outlines. Any special inks/treatments should be set up as a named swatch in *Illustrator*.



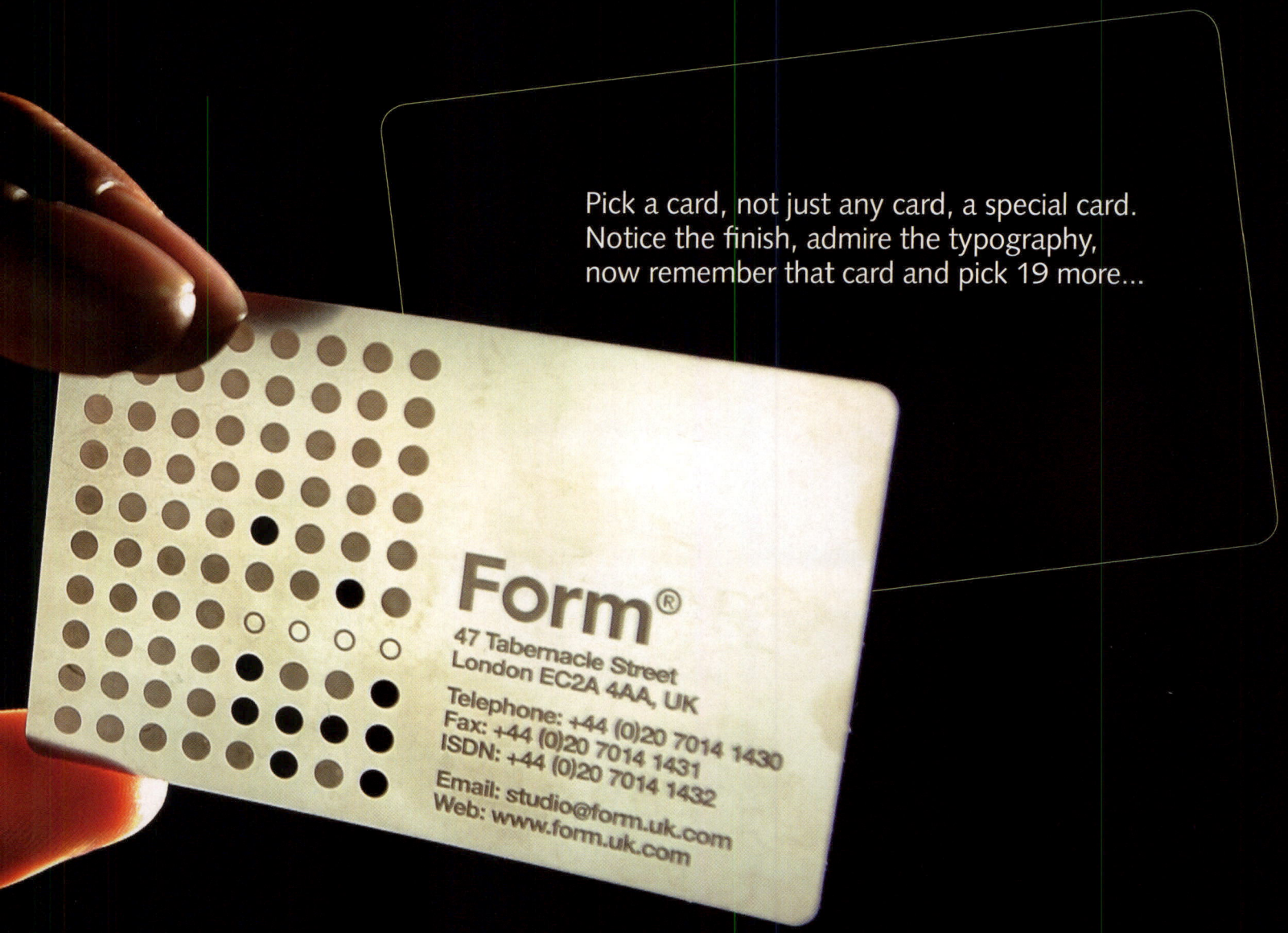
8 Crop marks should be set up by hand. Create guides around your template and set up 0.2pt weight, 5mm length, registration strokes. Place them 3mm from the borders as shown above with 3mm around your template. The inner border is your bleed area, which any solid colour needs to reach to ensure that they print to the edges of the cropped paper.



9 Always print separations before sending the files off. Because you'll often be printing Pantone spot colours (rather than CMYK) every colour will need to be specified. ca-p

Contemporary

business card design


Pick a card, not just any card, a special card.
Notice the finish, admire the typography,
now remember that card and pick 19 more...
Form®
47 Tabernacle Street
London EC2A 4AA, UK
Telephone: +44 (0)20 7014 1430
Fax: +44 (0)20 7014 1431
ISDN: +44 (0)20 7014 1432
Email: studio@form.uk.com
Web: www.form.uk.com

The business card is a very personal item; it's one of the few pieces of graphic design which is traded manually, passing from hand to hand on a daily basis. As such, great care is taken to ensure that this physical object in some way embodies the spirit of the individual or organisation it represents.

As anyone familiar with *American Psycho* will know, even the slightest change in stock or typography can illicit almost allergic reactions in those tuned to notice these things. The owners of the cards here have gone to much greater lengths: special materials, finishes and printing processes, unusual shapes and cuts. All these techniques are drafted in to achieve the desired effect, possibly to the distress of the printers called upon to execute them.

Graphic designers in particular are willing to go to considerable lengths to make sure their cards stand out. Prices of £2 per card aren't unusual among those willing to try out more unconventional materials, metals and difficult printing methods.

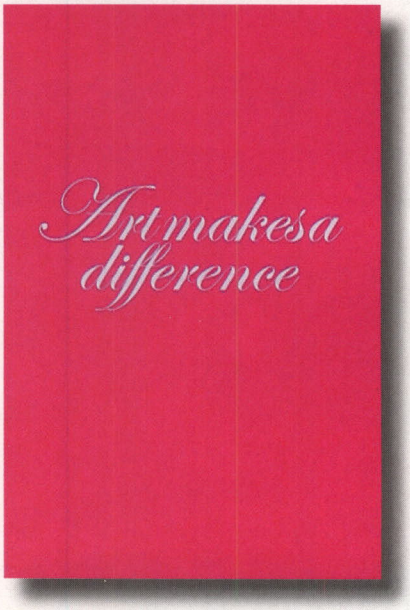
Under these circumstances, the card becomes a gift rather than a simple carrier of information. The nature of the gift varies from visual joke in the case of PSYOP's lottery ticket to tactile treat with Precursor's book binding material, but the underlying tactic is to make the card itself a desirable thing.

Form ∧
The Form business card is rendered in stainless steel, the type etched into the material. Along with the Form 'dots' identity, which incidentally spells 'Form' in ticker typesetting code, this card has a lasting presence.

< Walking the Dog
When Elmwood design worked on the corporate ID and stationery for a local dog-walking company, it gave them the chance to be a bit playful. The cards are lighthearted, thoughtful and typographically interesting all at once.

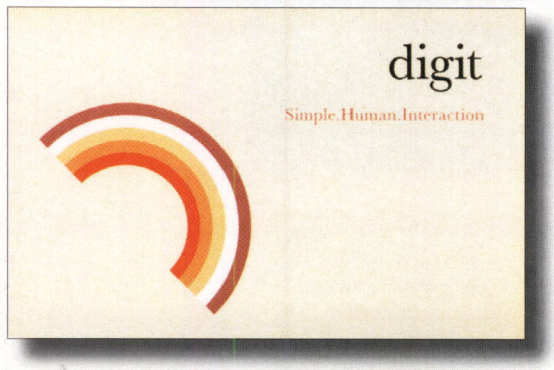
UniForm
This card was screen-printed onto 'Glow Edge' lime green plastic, which appears to glow as it catches certain light. It's a great example of designers looking for challenging combinations of print and material to deliver something unique. <

Honkshoo
Cut from sheet aluminium, these little babies weigh in at nearly £2 a go. They're worth it because the material has the same durable and desirable sheen as expensive technology, conjuring up all the right images. ∨



Art makes a difference ∧
Franki&Jonny pulled together the disparate arms of this creative company while simultaneously proving that you can still be clever enough to produce a great card just by coming up with the right phrase. We hope it's true.

Challs
Steve Gridley
Challs International Limited
PO Box 7, Ipswich, Suffolk IP7 6DH
Tel: 01473 828700 Fax: 01473 828701 Mob: 07713 162825
email: stephen.gridley@challs.com www.challs.com



Challs

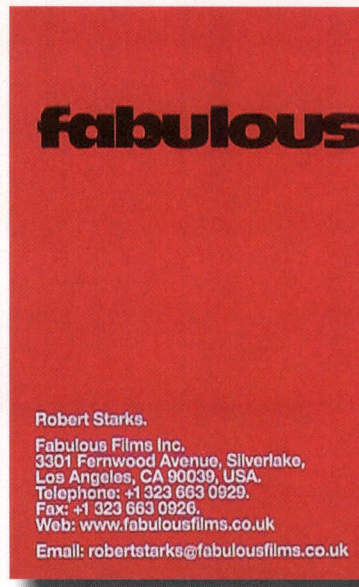
Elmwood produced the identity and stationery for Challs, "A company concerned with drains." The simplicity of the concept here is what makes it so effective: the hole cut in the card immediately asks a question, the business gives you an answer. Very neat.

Digit

Digit's Tess O'Leary explains the thinking behind Digit's new look: "When we re-branded, we came up with the new strapline 'Simple. Human. Interaction'." The cards reflect that philosophy, relying on honest quality to do the shouting.

Fabulous Films

This card was designed by Paul West and Nick Hard at Form, and uses red foil block on red on one side, and red foil block on white on the reverse. Their explanation: "We liked the textural differences created by the shiny red on the matt red."

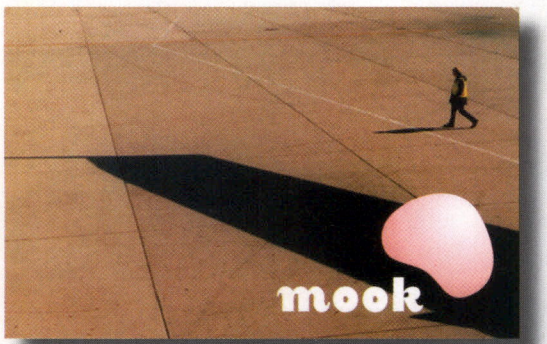


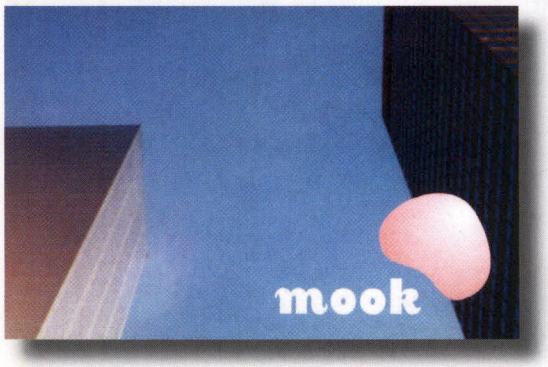
Mook

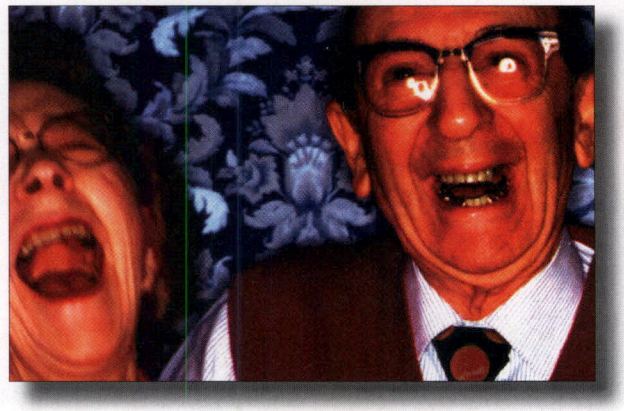
Following a minimalist re-brand designed to enable Mook's work to speak for itself, the use of a serif font on the new cards has a sophisticated touch which Creative Director Tom Evans is happy to see take centre stage, shifting the brand into the background.

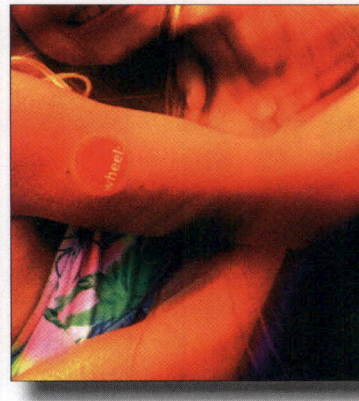
Wheel

Marc Giusti, Creative Director at digital communication company Wheel explains that rather than job titles they, "Preferred personal descriptions, giving something of the approach of the person whose card you're holding." His own reads, "It's about ideas, right?"







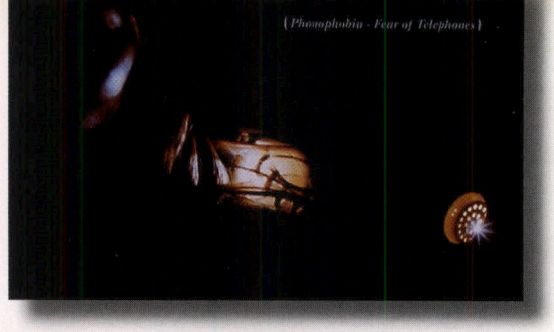


Precursor

Using a book-binding material known as 'Curious Touch' Precursor's cards are a tactile treat. "They feel kind of like skin," explains designer Noah Harris. Relatively expensive, the cards come in at something like £1 each.

< Neville Brody's emergency back-up card

Caught sans-card, Neville Brody got his back-up cards printed by street vendors in Mexico City. The wiley merchants carry their presses with them and offer a simple service: font, alignment, stock. Brody was enthralled, saying "It's like ordering from a Chinese menu."



Angel

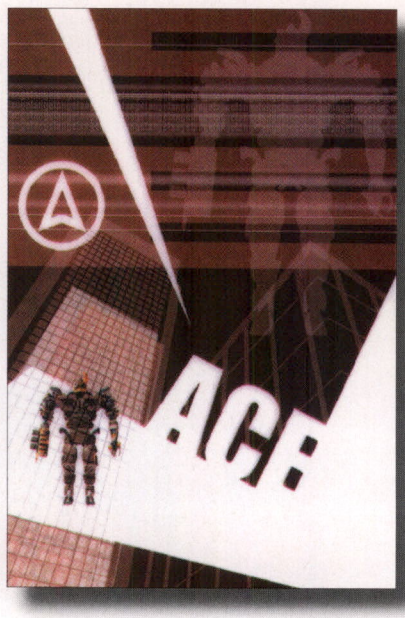
Inspired by a combined desire to stand out and minimise costs, Angel graphics decided its cards should be multi-function. With a range of designs, the cards double up as compliment slips, each having space for a message in the postcard-style layout.

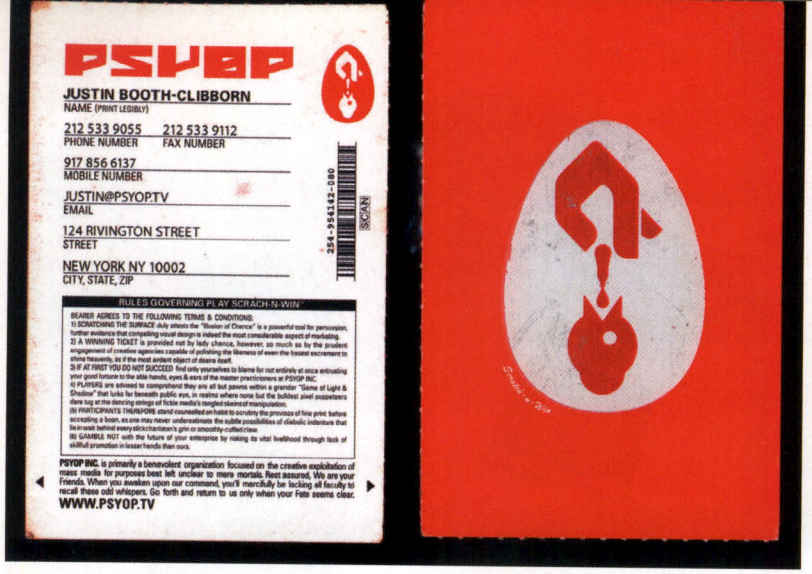
Portobello Festival

Research Studio has designed this striking card for the Portobello Festival. Printed using fluorescent and silver metallic inks, it's hard to look away from the vibrancy of the colour scheme. This is another tribute to an expanded print repertoire.

Ministry of Fear

Franki&Jonny branded this film company, using phobias as the starting point: "We did this amazing photoshoot where we created a scene of a couple kissing and included loads of subjects of phobias and then just lit that area of the scene for each card."





< PSYOP

Justin Booth-Clibborn of PSYOP explains the concept behind these very clever cards: "We had the idea to model them on cheap lotto tickets complete with perforated edges, small print disclaimers and a scratch-off panel." Every one's a winner.

Feel >

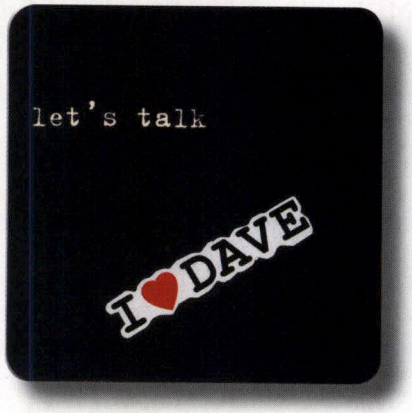
"Our business cards are unique – very touchy-feely," says Chris Arnold, Creative Director at Feel. "Visual people have nicely designed cards. Ours appeal to touch." They certainly do. Materials are of prime importance here; the card has weight, texture and colour.

ItsAllElectric.com

Franki&Jonny turned in some lovely cards for this online film community – hard copies are cool with the spot varnish creating the logo. Franki Goodwin proudly mentions that: "Oscar winner Adrien Brody called them the best business cards at Cannes!" v

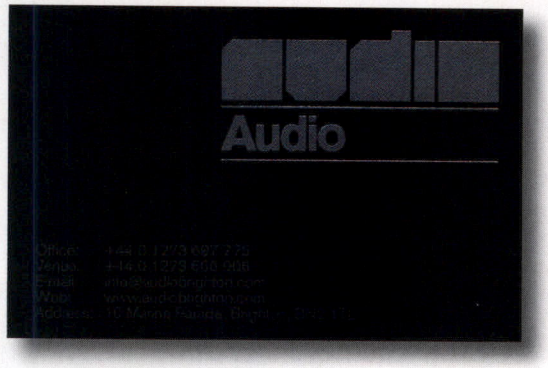
Dave >

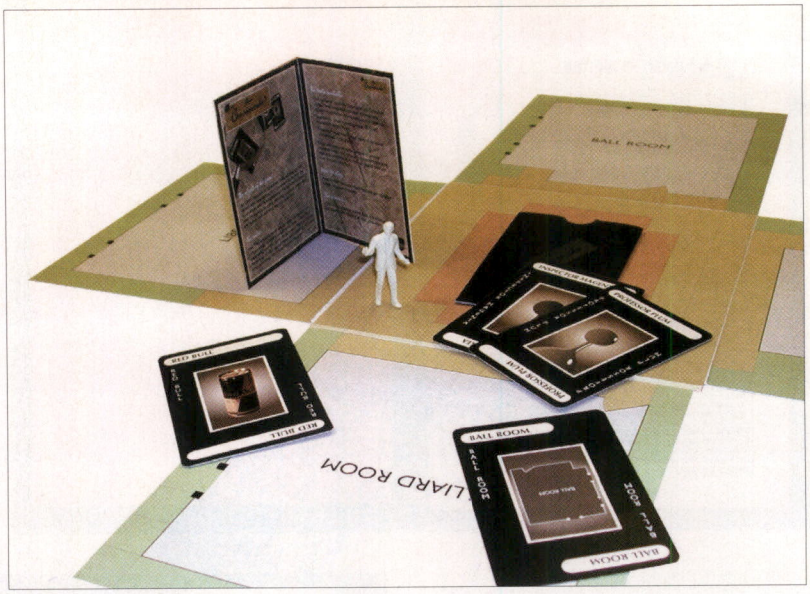
"People are bombarded with messages every day. Most of them ineffective," says Robbie Laughton, Creative Director at brand consultancy Dave. But this isn't just pub philosophy: "Dave uses a down-to-earth language, cuts through the crap and gets to the point."



Audio

Brighton-based Red Design produced this stylish card for its local night spot, Audio. Using foil block logo and metallic print onto 330gsm Black Plike, the designers matched the card to the luxurious feel of the club itself. Mmmmm, nice. v





Promotional design

We take a look at the products that design firms send into the world to fight the battle for hearts and minds...

The world is certainly not short of design companies, so it pays to make sure your clients feel loved; and if they're not already your clients, they need to find out what your love can be like. That's the point of promotional items such as the ones we've assembled here – they spread the love.

While each item is designed to promote a particular studio or agency, not one of them actually focuses on the work in question. The aim instead is more one of 'getting to know you'. Random Media's Duncan Bone is typical when he says, "We wanted to send out something that would show our philosophy, not just our work."

There's another category of item on display here, those with purported utility: PSYOP's drops could well find their way into the hands of a red-eyed executive and The Fish Can Sing's book on the middle class could help to resolve a nation's identity crisis. But for these to work, the link has to be tenuous enough that its inevitable failure has comedy value, a possibly risky strategy.

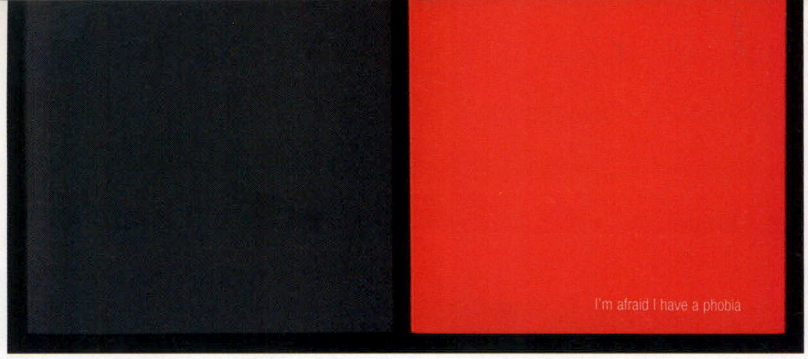
But what about payback? Without exception, those sending gifts to prospective clients have reported a positive response. Though expense may be involved in producing the goods, it's an investment worth making. You have to speculate to accumulate, as they say.

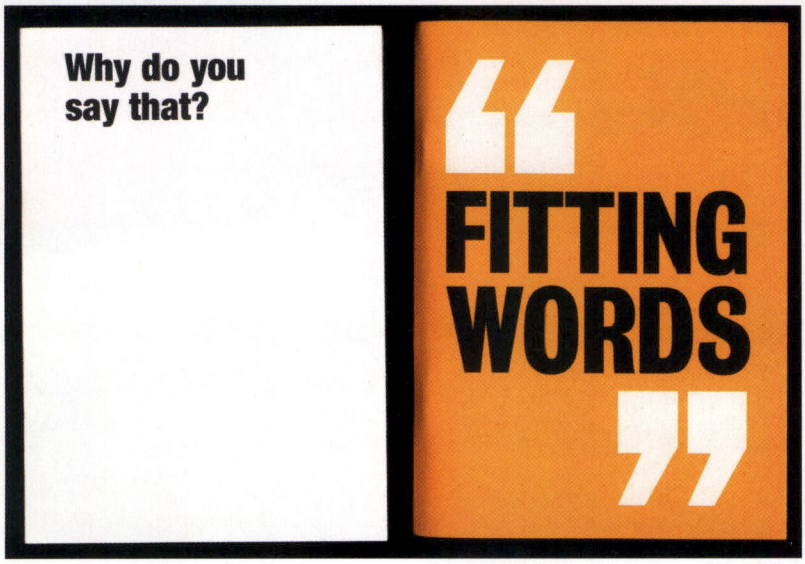
Small Japanese Soldier

They're not small, they aren't Japanese and nor are they soldiers, but when this multi-disciplinary design agency decided to send out a mailer, the theme was naturally oriental. Containing various branded goodies, the idea won the firm several new clients. ∨

Consumerdo

∧ Although Base One produced *Consumerdo* on behalf of a client, it deserves a mention. Every detail is true to the original *Cluedo*, the cards are laminated and die cut, the figures specially sourced in Germany and the tray custom pressed.





PSYOP eye-drops

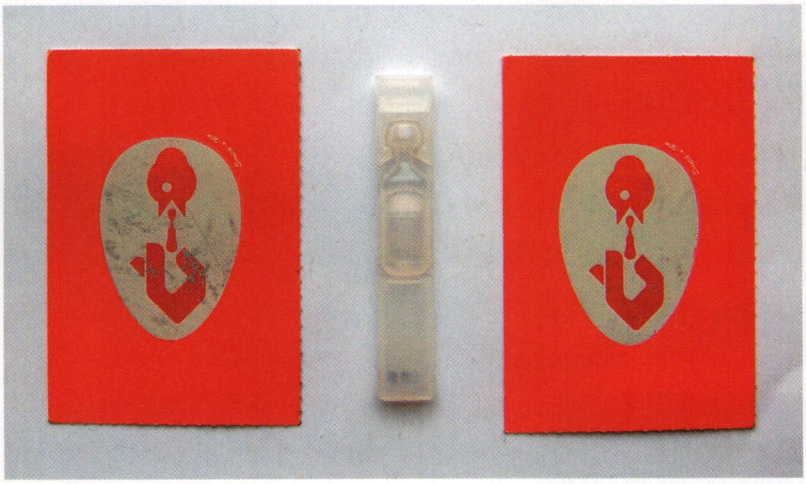
"In case you forget to blink while you're watching our work." Justin Booth-Clibborn explains the message which accompanied PSYOP's eye-drops, proving that promotional exercises don't have to break the bank if they involve creative thinking.

Pentagram books

Pentagram has been producing an annual book for its clients since 1974. Although sent out at Christmas, the books avoid referring to the festive season, instead taking strong graphical themes. Titles include *Fitting Words* and *I'm afraid I have a phobia.*

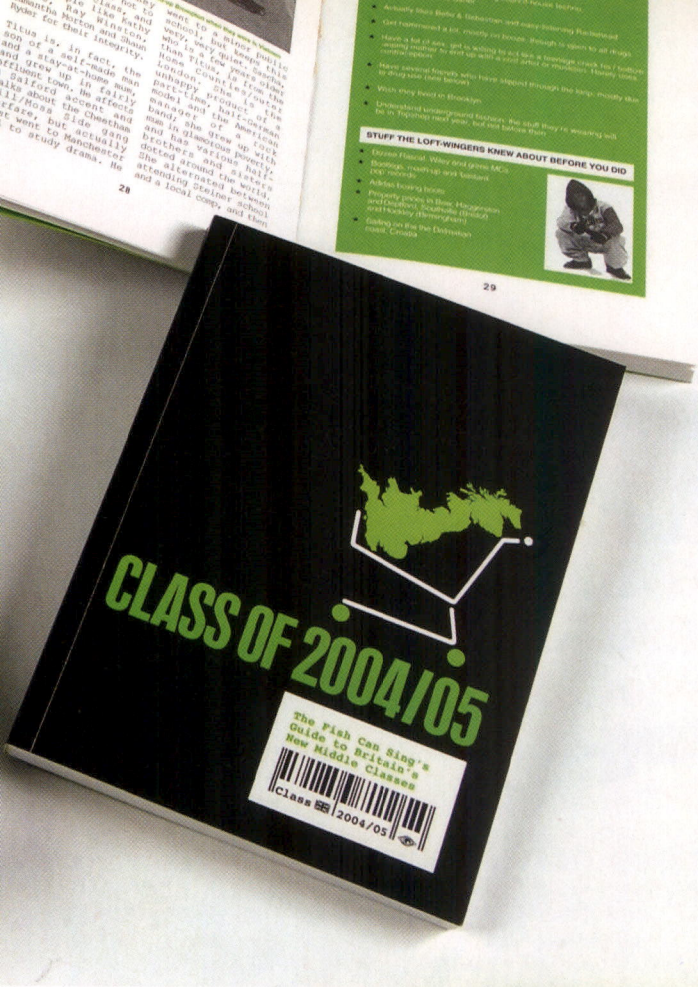
UniForm chopsticks

Sent out to promote the release of UniForm's sushi-inspired clothing and accessory range, this colourful mailer was inspired by the streets and eats of downtown Tokyo. The chopsticks kept the mind firmly on the gustatory theme of the clothing range.



Sensomatic robot

A stuffed robot has been doing the rounds, promoting Discomatic, the motion graphics arm of Austrian design-meisters Sensomatic. Based on a dancing pixel-robot, the stuffed version is just called 'robot'. There's no need to get overly familiar.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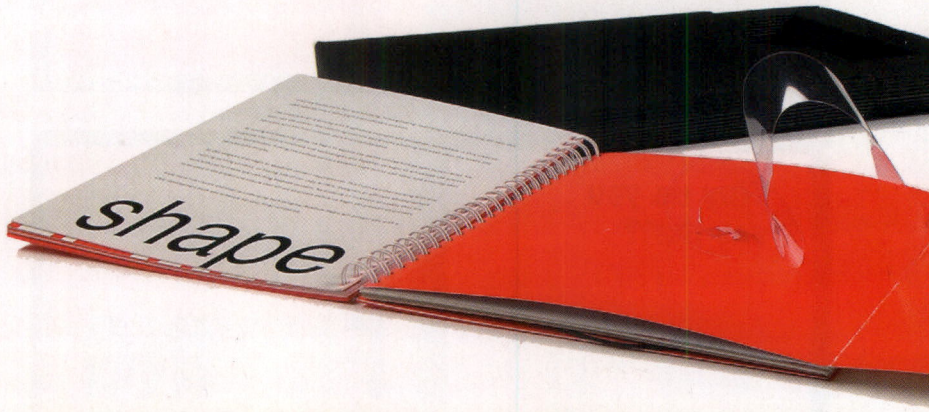
CLASS OF 2004/05
The Fish Can Sing's Guide to Britain's New Middle Classes
Class 2004/05



Random Media book ∧

"We wanted something that would show our philosophy," says Duncan Bone, Art Director at multi-disciplinary agency Random Media. Its book contains a series of playful visual exercises, which show off the firm's visual fluency perfectly.

TDR poster

This Designers Republic poster, sent out as a Christmas thank you in 1989, has taken on a life of its own, as TDR's Nick Bax explains: "They're very collectible now, they've been known to go for £150 on eBay!"

∨

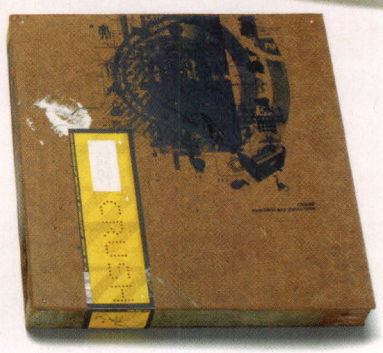
∧ Class of 2004/05

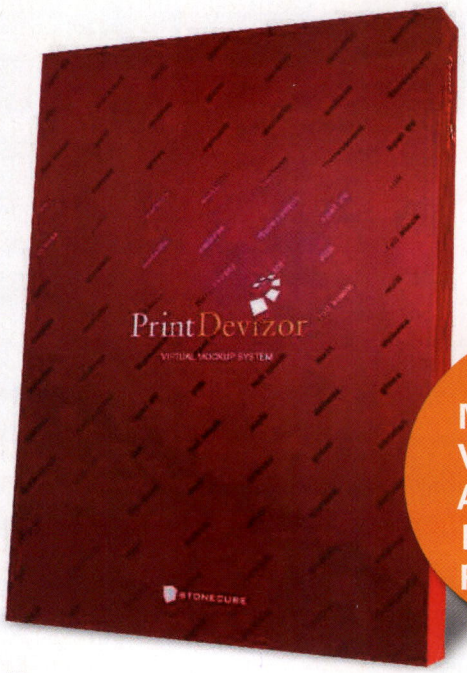
According to Howard Beale at international marketing agency The Fish Can Sing, the Class of 2004/05 book was the result of "some insightful cultural analysis", brought on by the demise of the middle class. Luckily, "It was also a bit of fun."

Crush Design box

First there was a poster cut in to 20 postcards, sealed between muslin and packed into a hand-made wooden box. Add a pair of screen-printed T-shirts, nail the box shut and affix instructional stickers, then you have Crush Design's brilliant promotional product.

∨





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As a designer thinking about starting your own business, there are a lot of daunting prospects. And one of them is gauging exactly how your files are going to print if you've used special finishes. We've all done it – think a job will look great in that gold metallic, only for it to come back looking dull and uninspiring.

Until now, there has been no way of accurately checking special finishes without pricey cromalins – you could be forking out around £100 a shot for these. *PrintDevizor* looks set to change this. This software is a new application from Stonecube that aims to solve the guesswork of special finishes and cut costs. *PrintDevizor* fits into the creative workflow and works with such applications as *Photoshop*, offering you a real-time, interactive view of what your special finish will look like – whether it's foil, spot colour, metallic ink or varnish. Each finish can be viewed at 360 degrees in a range of lighting environments, bridging the gap between concept and reality. Concepts can be exported as interactive views using QuickTime VR for emailing to clients and getting the go-ahead.

Stonecube will be launching and demonstrating *PrintDevizor* at this year's MacExpo London – held at the Business Design Centre, Islington, from 18–20 November. See it there, and enter our competition now to win a copy. Answer the question below at **[w]** www.computerarts.co.uk/competition or send us a postcard.

The question

Which of these can *PrintDevizor* simulate in real-time?

a) Special finishes

b) Special fried rice

c) Special K

How to enter

Choose one of three ways to enter:

1. Visit **[w]** www.computerarts.co.uk/competition.
2. Send a postcard with your answer, full name, address and telephone number to: *PrintDevizor* Competition, *Computer Arts Projects*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.
3. Or enter via text. Send us a message that says 'CA Print' then leave a space and add your one-letter answer, i.e. 'CA Print C', to 84600. (Each entry costs 50p. If you're not the bill payer, please seek permission before entering.)

The rules: The closing date for this competition is 15 December 2004. Employees of Stonecube and Future Publishing, their agents and families are not permitted to enter. Multiple entries are not accepted. The Editor's decision is final and there are no cash alternatives. No other correspondence will be entered into. If you are entering by post and do not wish any of the companies involved in this competition to contact you with further offers, please indicate this on your entry. We will not pass your details on to third parties.

For more information on *PrintDevizor* and Stonecube's other products, visit [w] www.stonecube.com. See the company on stand 415 at MacExpo, held at the Business Design Centre, Islington, from 18–20 November 2004.

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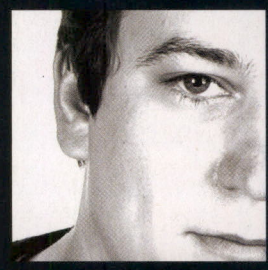

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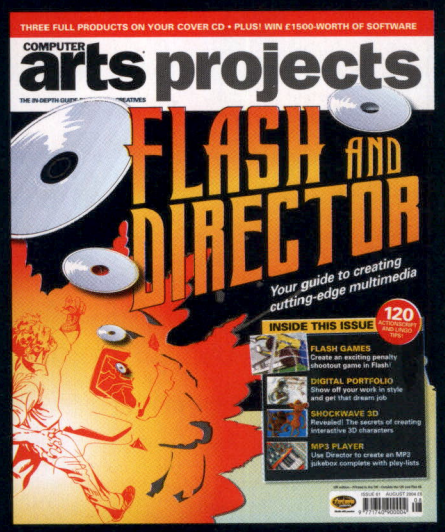
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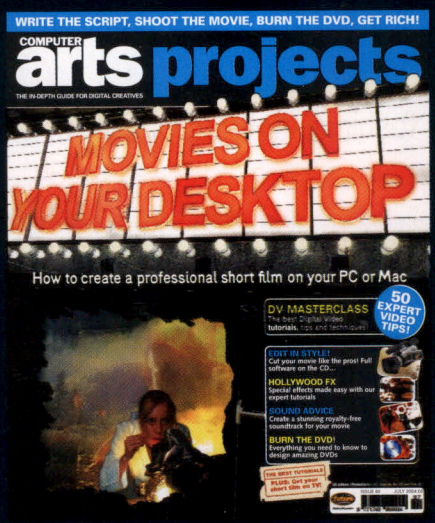
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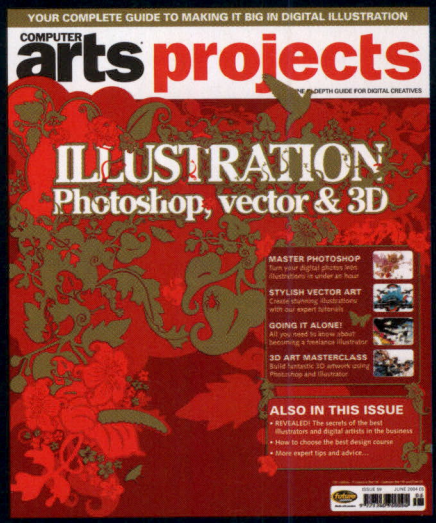
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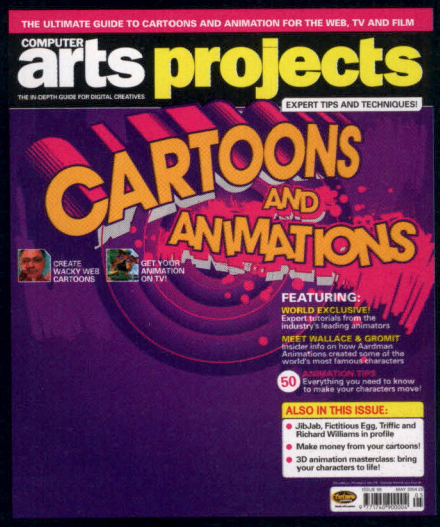
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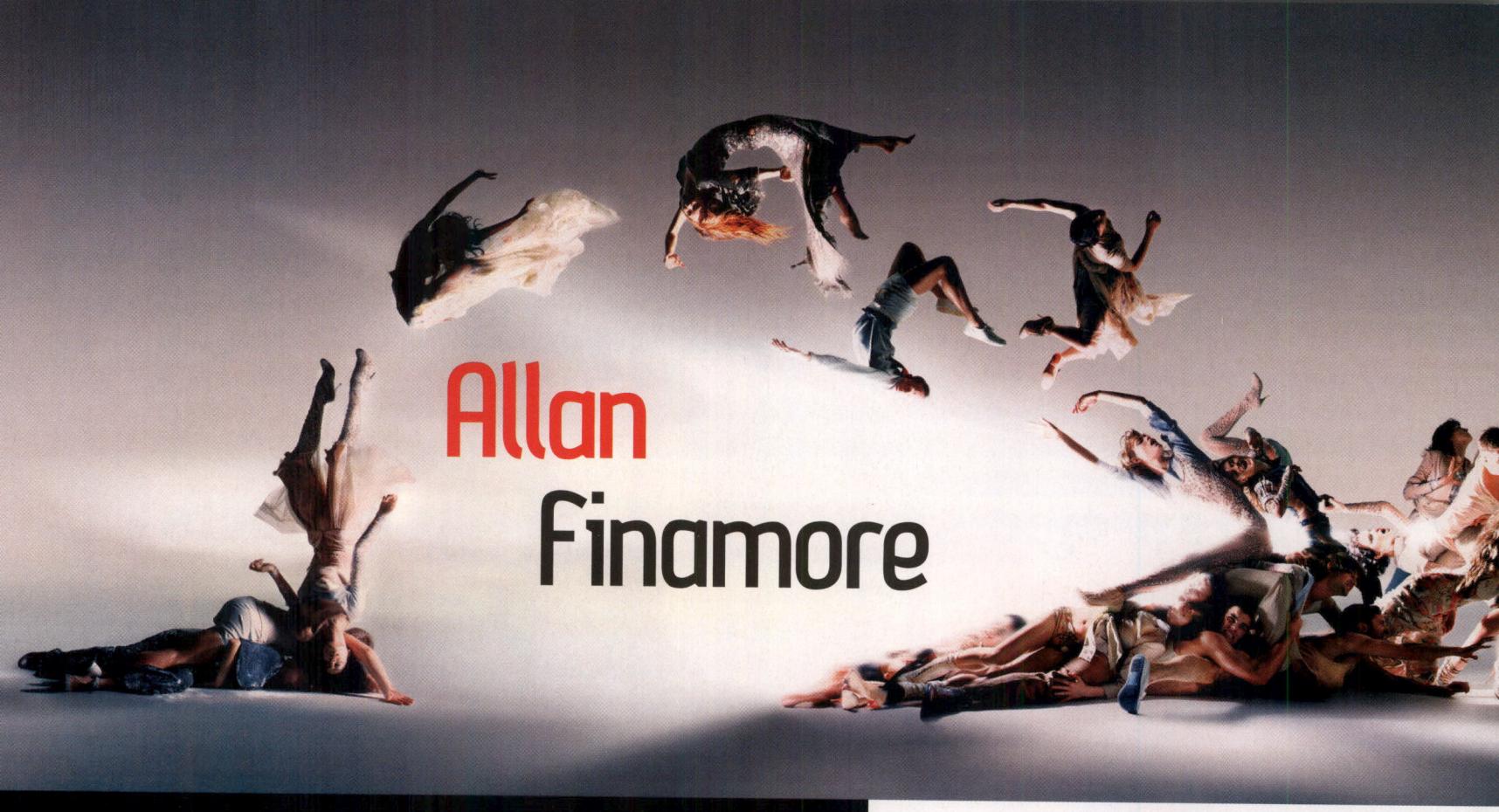


Allan Finamore

"Everyone is looking for the latest, craziest thing. Looking for something nobody has seen before."
Allan Finamore opens a window on fashion's search for digital perfection...

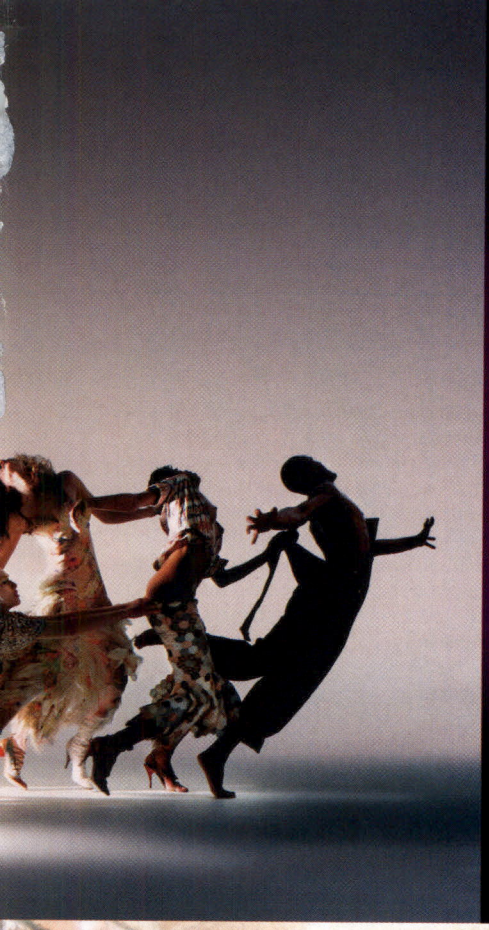
With 12 Dior campaigns under his belt and the 13th already booked, digital artist and retoucher Allan Finamore is at the top of his game. Working for long-time client Nick Knight, it's Allan's job to make the fantasy world inhabited by celebrities and models look like the only place you ever wanted to be.

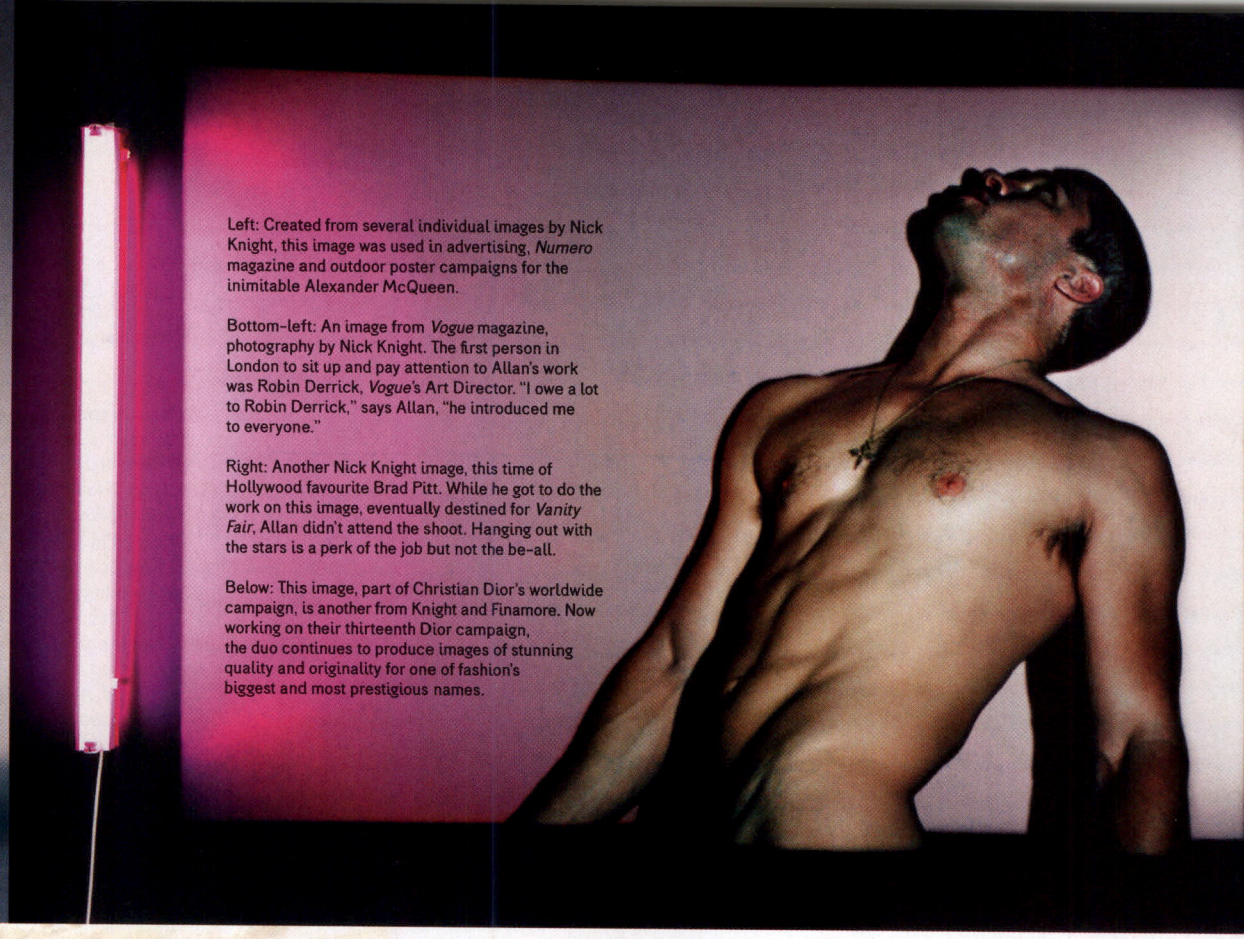
Starting out as a Californian airbrush artist, Allan's work now helps to define what's cool for some of the biggest names in fashion, beauty and technology. "When I arrived in London in 1997 I knew no one," says Allan, who had been sent to London to set up a UK satellite office for Nucleus Studio. His New York bosses were keen to get a foothold in the European advertising and fashion markets because, Allan explains, "The UK and Europe are the best for ads, print media particularly." Allan was to be their Trojan horse: "After that I just got kind of stuck here."

London calling

"They gave me loads of money to spend on kit but I didn't know anyone at all, no leads," explains Allan. Faced with a relatively uncaring London, he began to spread around a bit of Californian charm: "I ended up just cold-calling people and eventually got to see Robin Derrick at *Vogue* UK." Allan did a few samples for Derrick, and Vogue's Creative Director introduced him to the fashion world's movers and shakers. "I owe a lot to Robin Derrick, he was great, he introduced me to everyone."

From there things began to snowball as Allan's reputation started to spread. "So I'd done a few things for Robin, and Nick





Left: Created from several individual images by Nick Knight, this image was used in advertising, *Numero* magazine and outdoor poster campaigns for the inimitable Alexander McQueen.

Bottom-left: An image from *Vogue* magazine, photography by Nick Knight. The first person in London to sit up and pay attention to Allan's work was Robin Derrick, *Vogue*'s Art Director. "I owe a lot to Robin Derrick," says Allan, "he introduced me to everyone."

Right: Another Nick Knight image, this time of Hollywood favourite Brad Pitt. While he got to do the work on this image, eventually destined for *Vanity Fair*, Allan didn't attend the shoot. Hanging out with the stars is a perk of the job but not the be-all.

Below: This image, part of Christian Dior's worldwide campaign, is another from Knight and Finamore. Now working on their thirteenth Dior campaign, the duo continues to produce images of stunning quality and originality for one of fashion's biggest and most prestigious names.

had seen them. He just called me up." 'Nick' is renowned fashion photographer Nick Knight. "I did my first Dior campaign in 1999 and have done every campaign since."

Getting personal

Allan's relationship with Nick Knight has been central to his career. "Everything I do is for Nick," he explains. It's what Allan calls a 'boutique' set-up: "Maintaining a relationship with the photographer or art director, you build up a feeling which is much more personal so you have an understanding of what they want." This, he feels, is superior to the standard briefing and pitching scenario where personality is eliminated from the equation.

This is central to Allan's working practice; it's what sets him apart from the select band of retouchers that work for the even more select band of 'in-demand' photographers. That this approach worked was made clear to him during his time at Nucleus in New York, "It was great; they had people like Steven Meisel and Albert Watson. They got the right clients and kept it high end.

"Everything comes through my hands, I handle the whole thing myself if I can." This explains why there's only really time for one or two clients, any more would lead to a dilution of the attention Allan gives to his jobs. "A single image will take anything from 40 to 60 hours' work and be made up from something like 30-40 separate images."

This approach also means he's overrun with work: "I thought it was Thursday. Oh man, it's just been crazy, we've started doing work for Rimmel." He says this as if that would be enough to explain the situation to anyone... Though he's taking on a full-time retoucher and has an assistant, maintaining the boutique scenario is hard work, but it pays off. "I was working like crazy over at Metro Imaging," he says. "They have great backup and everything but I was trying to maintain the personal relationship I had with Nick as well. In the end I just thought I'd be better off on my own."

Having struck out alone in 2002, Allan's approach is a winning one. "I was asked to go to see this ad company, they called up and asked me to bring along my book. I had to just say, 'Ummmm, actually, I don't have one'." Instead, he printed up a few proofs from recent jobs and went over to see them. "They were really ›

"Sometimes an image will take from 40 to 60 hours' work and be made up from something like 30-40 separate images."

receptive. I think they liked the idea that just one person will be looking after their needs. They don't want to be passed from account handler to creative director to artist when they call up."

Creative process

"I have to confess, I'm a bit of a techno-geek," says Allan. This is truer than is usual in Allan's case. His studio is populated with defunct, disassembled and cannibalised technology of all kinds, drafted in to produce that unexpectedly brilliant look that big name clients are looking for. "That's the nature of this business," he says, but Allan seems pleased this is the case. "Everyone is looking for the latest, craziest thing. Looking for something nobody has seen before. Printing on weird stuff, turning the scanner on its side and putting old camera lenses up against the light."

This is proper experimentation, so much more 'real' than using unexpected filters together. While you'd expect most of it to fall on its face, Allan says there's a much better success ratio: "Messing around with stuff pays off a lot actually. I had these security cameras and I hooked up a scart lead to link them into the Mac. The camera lenses were so crap they gave off these amazing lens flares. I used those in a Dior campaign."

So does he confess to clients they're paying for security footage? "Yeah! Because I think it's cool." And he's right, it is. Not as cool as Allan's pet project though, involving Meccano, remote control cars and a couple of flatbed scanners: "A scanner that rolls along the ground and scans." The idea, he explains, is that the model would lie underneath and the scanner would roll over them. "All it needs is some kind of software guru to come along and set the thing up – we need it to be continuous."

Paper skin

"All the cosmetics houses have different vibes for the skin they use." Allan's an expert on printed skin. Different brands like to show skin of varying styles, some more real than others; all, of course, have to be perfect. "It changes internationally too. For Japan you have to make skin two stops lighter, they like an almost blown-out look. For the Middle East you aren't allowed to show hardly any skin so you have to crop right in to the eyes." The minutiae demanded of beauty and fashion work is astonishing.

The demand for up-to-date technology is pretty rigorous too. "We scan images to about 100 to 150MB, which quickly doubles as you add layers. Working files are regularly 2-6 Gig. If you convert to CMYK you add another 25 per cent." To cope with this Allan uses top flight G5s, dual processors and the full 8GB of RAM. "As soon as new tech comes out we have to have it. It's always more expensive but you just have to take the hit."

Software is a little more straightforward, although its use is peculiarly intensive, "I was trained on Barco machines and I used to cut back and forth between different platforms but they've all fallen by the wayside." Adobe has cornered the market it seems: "Now I use the full complement of Creative Suite applications, and things like *After Effects*."

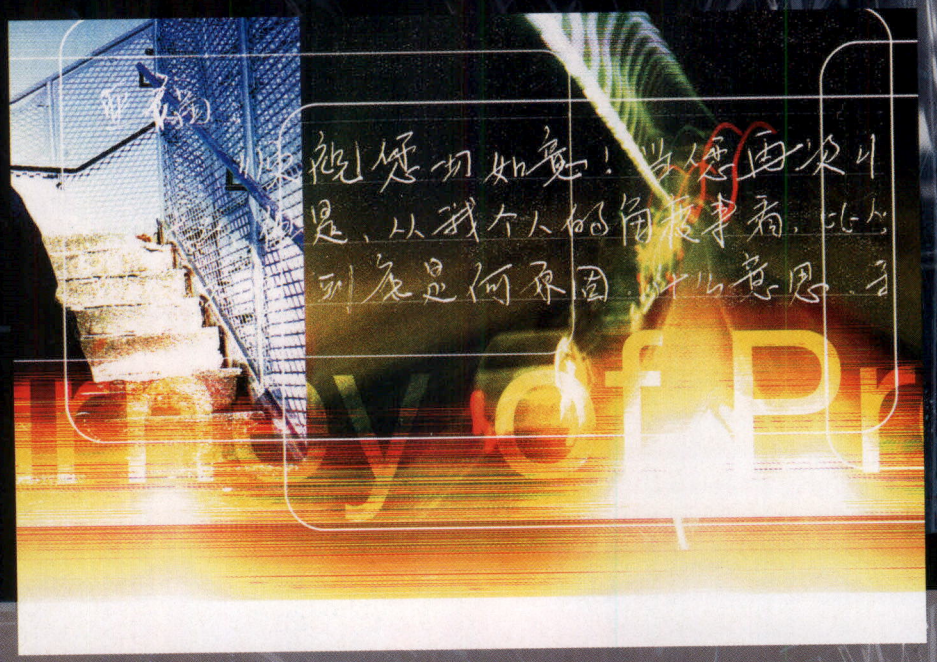
The work is split between more standard retouching work and those looking for something extra. "Some clients dump the images on us and we just have to graft away to make them look perfect – that's where the craft comes in." When the quest is to find something unusual, they almost pray for an accident: "Nick's really into that," says Allan. "Whenever there's an accident everyone stops and goes 'ooh!' You know, how can we use that?"

Whichever becomes the more sought-after approach, Allan's sure he'll be around to deliver: "This industry's always changing. You have to remember it didn't exist ten years ago. Who knows what will be happening in five years' time?" After all, says Allan, "People will always want to look pretty one way or another." ca-p

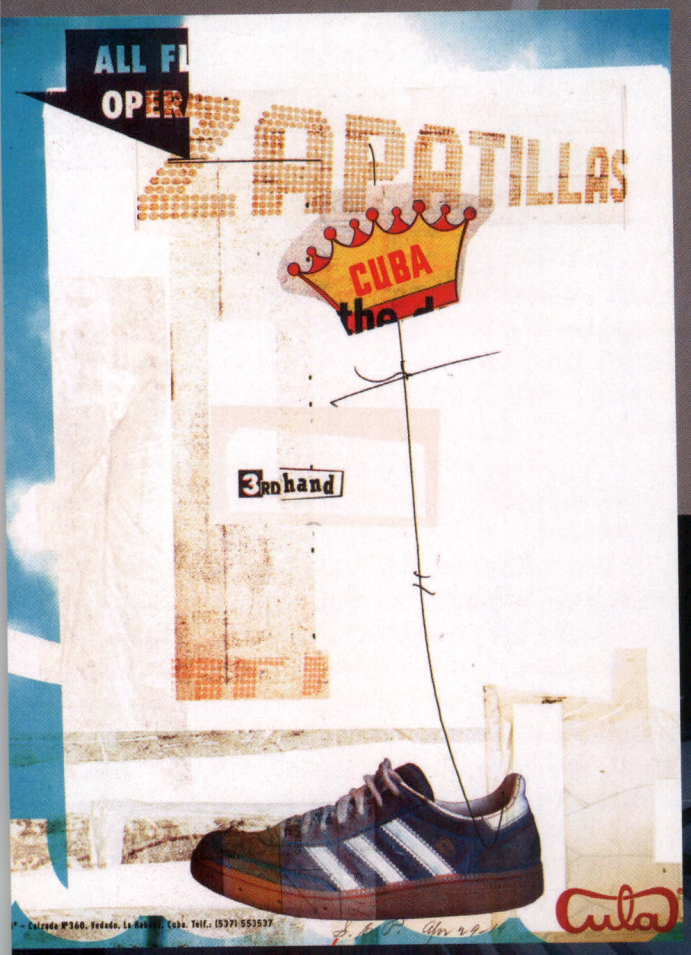
You can contact Allan Finamore via **[w]** www.afinamore.com or at **[e]** allan@afinamore.com.

Opposite page: The quest for originality is relentless in the fashion world and this leads Allan to some pretty extreme lengths to get things just right, from bizarre lighting scenarios to special lenses and huge compositions. This image for Dior is no exception.

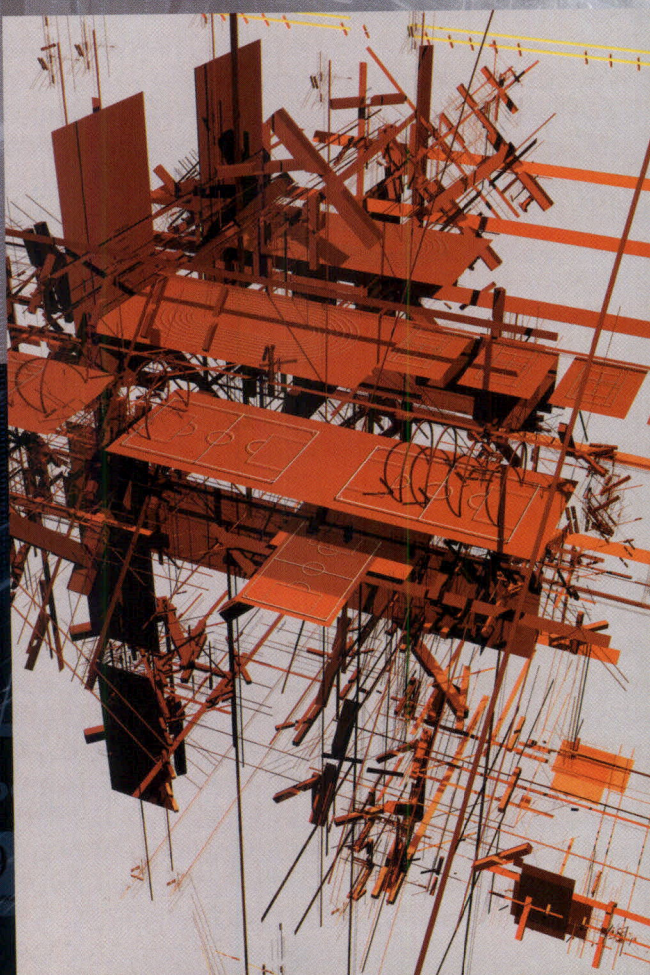
This page: Every pixel has to be attended to in high-profile work such as this Nick Knight piece for Dior eye wear. "Working files are regularly between 2-6 Gig," says Allan. To cope with this it's essential that Allan has the latest in technology. Luckily he's "a bit of a techno-geek."



My first big break...



Making the shift to professional status is always going to be tough, but a combination of determination, hard work and luck will usually see you through...



The gap between being able to do something you enjoy and being paid large sums of money to do it for a living can at times seem enormous because, as the old adage goes, sometimes it really is not what you know but who you know.

In the design field, of course, it's all about skills and talent, so no matter how much you put into your CV and work experience, the real creativity you're capable of is instantly apparent from your portfolio.

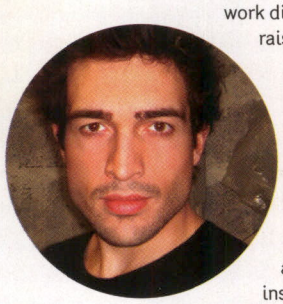
Getting your first big break can sometimes be about luck as much as anything else, but if there is a common thread in the way the designers we interview here have broken into the industry, it's that determination and self belief will always win out in the end.

All of the designers *Computer Arts Projects* speaks to over the next four pages can name one instance which they consider to have got them started as professionals, but that was always backed up by a large helping of hard work. The best advice included here comes from Dutch designer Joost Korngold: don't sit around and wait for the big break to come – "stick your neck out" and make it happen!

This is one of seven illustrations by Danny created for an upcoming Die Gestalten Verlag book, *The Illustrated Fairy Tales of Hans Christian Andersen*. It shows a mother reaching for her dead child. It's also featured on the cover of the October issue of French design magazine *étapes*.

Danny Franzreb, Taobot

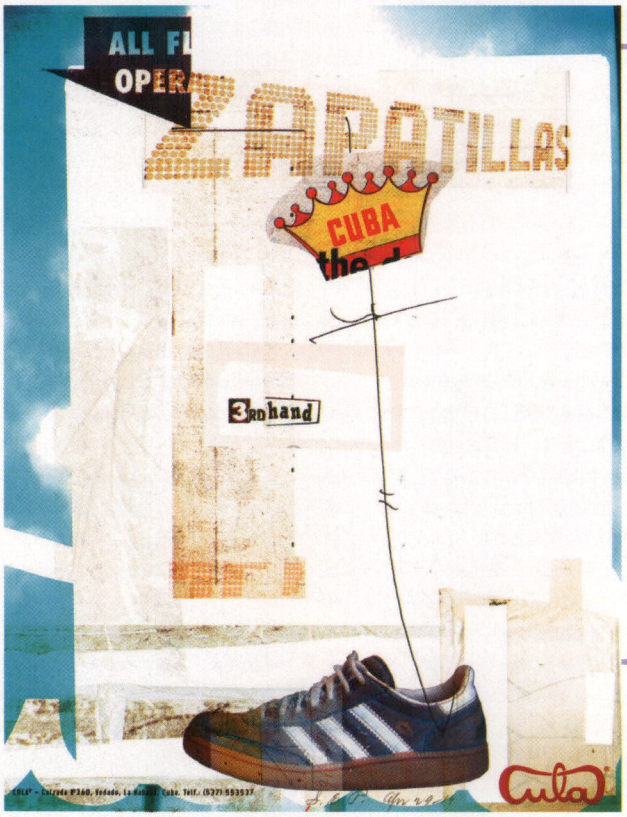
www.taobot.com



For Danny Franzreb, a job in interactive design was always on the cards given he was both drawing and sitting in front of a computer at the tender age of four – before trading up to "skateboarding, graffiti and photography" when a little bit older. From this background, it was easy for Danny to make the jump into the professional design world after some stints teaching and talking at *Flash* conferences to eventually handling a *Flash* project for a Smirnoff ICE website. He says the speaking and teaching work did a lot to open doors for him and raise his profile.

"Diageo, the company behind Smirnoff, gave me my first real big break in 2002," begins Danny. "I held a workshop at a university that one of the employees of [Diageo's] studio attended – he suggested contacting me. Live events such as conferences are always a great place to meet inspiring people."

Despite being delighted to land the project, Danny says the job was an eye-opener – especially in terms of the hours he had to put in: "The whole development process from the first pitch to the final *Flash* website was completed in under two months. I sometimes had to work 20 hours or more and even slept in the studio in the final state of the project."



Thomas Schostok, THS

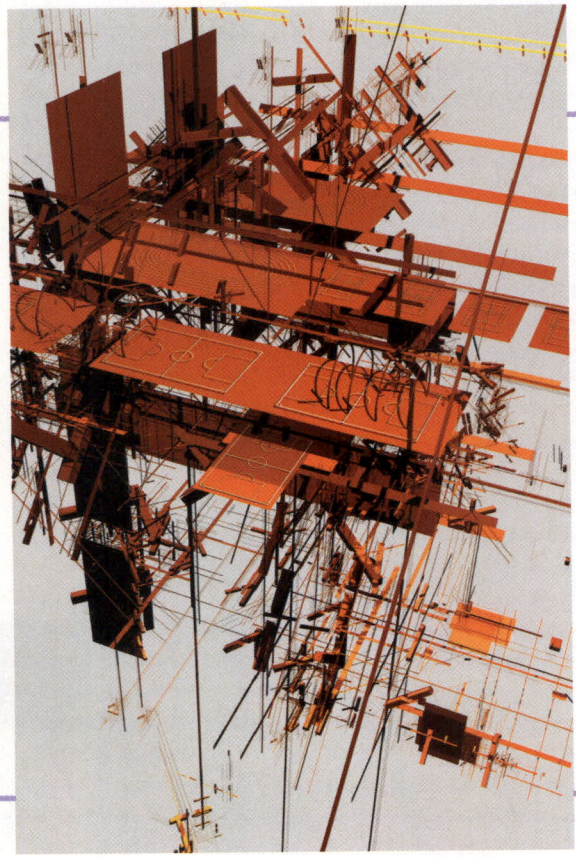
www.ths.nu

German designer Thomas Schostok says the creation of the first issue of online design, typography, art and illustration magazine *BEAST* was the big break he had been looking for, even though the project was self-developed and initiated. Launched in July of 2001 and running for 12 issues until July 2002, *BEAST* was a PDF magazine drawing together a breathtaking range of work from contributors across Europe.

"The idea for *BEAST* was born by drinking instant coffee, which I like more than filter coffee," explains Thomas. "*BEAST* was born to do something new. I always needed the pressure to make designs in a limited amount of time – I like being under pressure. A monthly project with an unlimited amount of pages was the ideal way of being creative."

Thomas, who although having been involved in the design business since 1991 only considered himself a designer some four years later, says good talent definitely needs the space to develop.

"Being a good designer or artist doesn't come from today to tomorrow," he says. "It really needs time – sometimes months or even years. And you always have to improve yourself, you always have to start again from scratch, you always have to experiment."



Joost Korngold, Renascent

www.renascent.nl

When Dutch designer Joost Korngold lost his job in a new-media design company, he found the stroke of bad luck was just what he needed to go after bigger and better things. Although working in the design field since graduating from graphic design school in 1999, Joost says it was losing a job that led him to win an important commission with Nike.

"After the last company I worked for went under, I had to find a new job," says Joost. "I sent out my portfolio to several companies and got a reaction from Postpanic in Amsterdam. Although they weren't looking for anyone full-time, they commissioned me to work on a project for Nike. That made up my mind to become a freelancer."

Nowadays, Joost still works in the freelance field in the Netherlands, winning commissions and carrying out a range of design work for the likes of Nike, Hewlett Packard, Philips and Adobe.

When it comes to advice for new designers looking for that important first break, he believes it's important to realise that great commissions and prospective employers won't materialise out of thin air. "Don't wait for it – stick your neck out and be seen," he states.

(Left) 3D Nike World was created to function as transitions between sport footage, a project mastered by Postpanic. Pictured is Joost's render of this world.

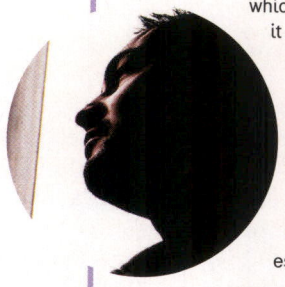
BEAST magazine was a PDF publication focusing on "design, photography, mind and matter and all kinds of creative exhausts." A book is currently in development.

Rob Chiu, The Ronin

www.theronin.co.uk

Rob Chiu took what may possibly be the most straightforward route into the industry of anyone profiled here: he found an advert in his local Job Centre in Manchester asking for a graphic designer, applied and got a job "drawing brake pads in *FreeHand*" – something he managed to combine with a part-time design degree.

While this was his first professional position, and one which gave him some valuable experience, when it comes to his first big break, Rob modestly claims to be still waiting.



"I think it's more a process than an overnight thing and that process is still snowballing with each commission. Even when – or if – I get a big MTV or film credits commission, I think I will still be waiting for a big break," he says.

The main focus for Rob and his company, The Ronin, is motion graphics, and it's his work in this field – created while at Manchester Metropolitan University – which he considers to be most important in terms of establishing his name.

"My first ever motion piece – *Journey* – single-handedly led to commissions by Radisson Edwardian Hotels, Service Point and a trip to a Barcelona conference to act as the media artist in residence while also convincing film funders to give me money to make a short film called *Dual/Duel*," he says.

Stills from Rob Chiu's motion piece *Journey* – the film which earned him a first class degree in Graphic Design from Manchester Metropolitan University and lead to a number of commissions.

"Sexbook: My personal vision of sex dealing with keys and holes."

Mauro Gatti, Brainbox

www.thebrainbox.com

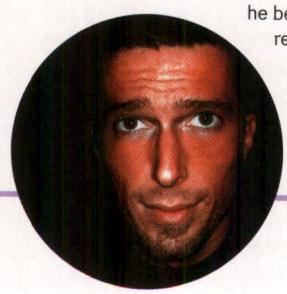
Mauro Gatti, Creative Director at motion, print and web group Brainbox, got his entrée to the professional design world via a family friend in the CD-ROM market and the chance to create some simple interfaces. "I was crap, but for the first time in my career I felt like a real designer," he says.

After freelancing in the CD-ROM world and as an internet designer "with unsatisfying economical and aesthetic results" Mauro sought the security of full-time work to hone his skills.

"I learned to be humble, to see my work with criticism, to give everything to get the best result I could and to work with the best group of people," he says. "The first period working full-time was like a rage against my ego, but after two years I felt ready to return to the wild side of freelancing."

Following this, Mauro picked up work with Yamaha Motors Italy, a client he believes gave him his first real chance to show what he could really do, even though the job was tough.

"I had to follow the guidelines, sit through hours of meetings and put in hours and hours of hard work. The Yamaha job has been the gym where I train in a very different world from my previous home-alone experiences," says Mauro.



Per Gustafson, Modern Style

www.modernstyle.nu

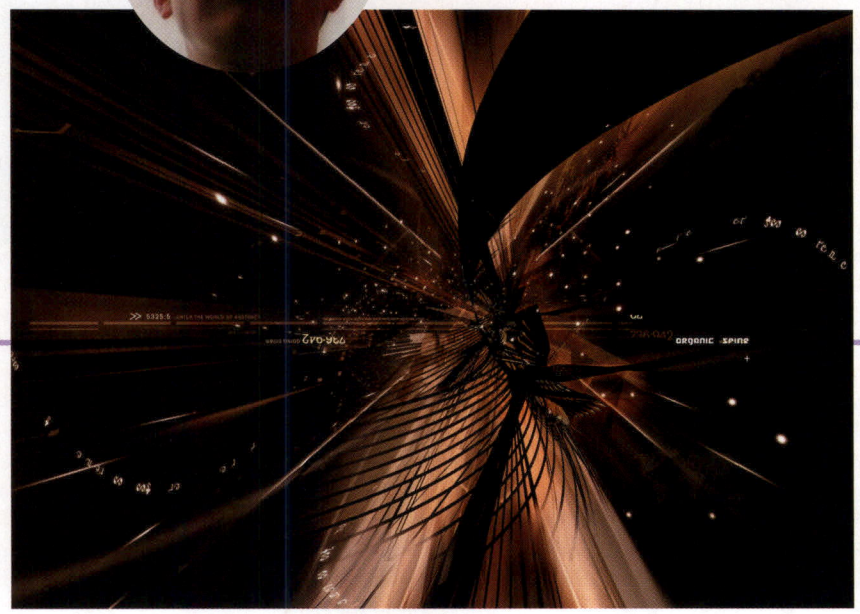
Swedish designer Per Gustafson came to the design industry with a background in fine art, making the switch to web and digital content creation around eight years ago after working as an illustrator and with oils.

He says he got his big break producing work for digital creative content library Digital Vision in 2002 for its Infinity 2 collection of layered *Photoshop* images – something which he says got his name into wider circulation.

"After Infinity 2, I started to get more work and larger clients began to contact me," says Per. "Digital Vision had seen my earlier work and got in touch as it was searching for a designer for a DVD series release."

Now producing work for his own Modern Style website as well as founding internet media company Geidemark Gustafson, he has produced work for a wide variety of clients including Adidas, UEFA and Ericsson.

In terms of advice for those wanting to follow in his footsteps, Per Gustafson is a big believer in determination, self belief and hard work. "Practise and try to get your work published and promoted. All promotion is good, and if you practise and never stop, you will just develop and your work will be discovered one day," he says.



Gustafson's layered *Photoshop* work for image library Digital Vision led to commissions from the likes of Adidas and UEFA.

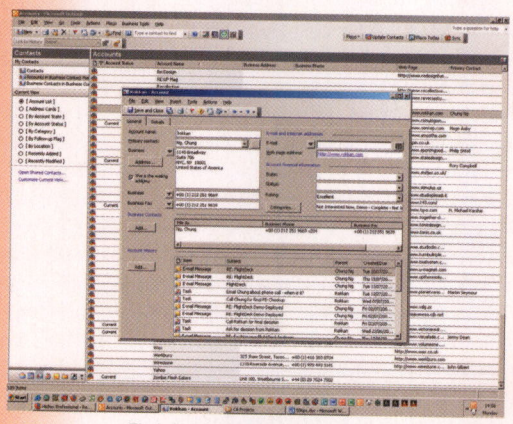
"Paperkut: My personal vision about fear and loneliness."

Illustration by Beat13 [w] www.beat13.co.uk

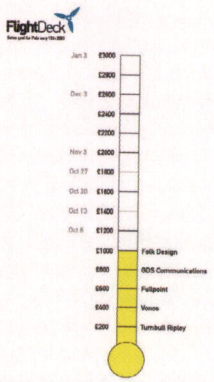
50 **business** tips

Don't let early errors hamper your success. These tips will prevent you from making the mistakes that many new businesses have made before you...

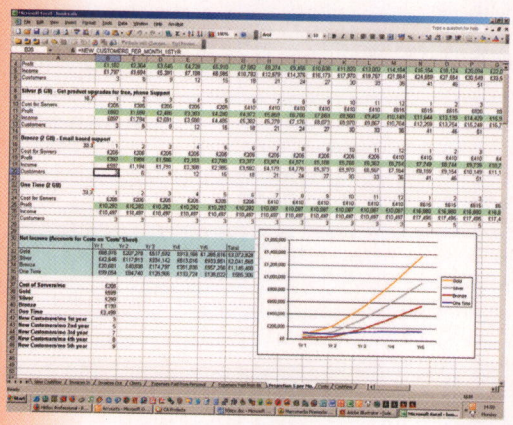
50 **business** tips



Tip 1. Contact Relationship Management is the key to keeping track of your client information.



Tip 7. Set yourself goals for sales figures. When you reach a new goal, reward yourself in some way.



Tip 15. Use *Excel* to keep track of all money matters – expenses, invoices and budgets.

Have you already started, or are thinking about starting, your own business? If so, we applaud you. It's the stuff that dreams are made of – until reality hits and you realise it's actually a lot harder than you thought it would be.

One of the hardest things about launching a company on your own is that the freedom you once craved as an employee can also be your worst enemy. Your boss is no longer calling the shots and all of the hard decisions are in your hands. Where do you start? How do you get organised? What are the things that you need to pay attention to, in order to keep your business healthy?

Well, that's where we're hoping to help you. We have 50 essential tips to save you huge amounts of headaches while keeping you firmly in the black. We're not trying to discourage you from starting off on your own – in fact, we'd love to see you succeed. Good luck!

Potential clients

1. CRM

Contact Relationship Management is the key to success – seriously. CRM is the process of keeping track of your clients, what you've talked about in the past, and their key info. Business Contact Manager is a great way to start and it's free with *MS Office 2003 Small Business Edition*.

2. A, B, C clients

You need to keep your potential clients prioritised so that you're not wasting time on those who aren't very likely to buy from you. Do this by placing them in categories: A for 'Very Interested', B for 'Interested' and C for 'Mildly Interested'. Make sure you take care of your 'A' clients before anyone else.

3. Dripping

You'll often run into potential clients who say, "We're interested, but not right now." Don't write these people off! Send them a little newsletter every few months to keep in contact. This is called 'dripping' on them.

4. Thank you notes

Everyone likes to be thanked. Whenever you have a good reason to thank a potential client (without being annoying, of course), hand-write a thank you note and pop it in the post.

5. Referrals

Hands down, the best way to approach a potential client is if a current client has suggested you contact them. This immediately removes many of the barriers between you and them, because they're more likely to trust you. Treat these client referrals like gold.

6. The formula

Making sales is simply a numbers game. If you make X amount of new contacts per month, you'll make X amount of sales. It will take you about three months to figure out the formula for your specific company, but once you do, use it to determine how many calls you need to make each month to reach your goals.

7. Goals chart

Not reaching your sales figures is discouraging. To overcome this, set a realistic goal for number of sales or jobs. Then print out a chart and add each new sale. You'll feel encouraged to see your progress charted on the wall.

8. Go where your clients are

Have a think about where you might meet potential clients. If a lot of them attend a certain kind of conference/event/club, go there and make sure you take plenty of business cards.

9. Sales mentality

Tailor your sales pitch to the type of person you're selling to. Look for clues in how they're dressed and how they carry themselves. Some people appreciate a straight down-to-earth approach. Others want to be complimented and praised. No matter what you do though, be genuine.

10. Reward yourself

Reward yourself whenever you reach a goal or finish a job. Find a small luxury that you really enjoy and only allow yourself to have it once you've reached that goal.

11. Know who you're calling
Before you make a call or pitch for business, find out as much information as you can. Who do you need to speak to? How do you pronounce their name? What role do they play? Knowing these things will show the client you're interested in them.

12. Prepare for meetings
Before you meet someone for the first time, research their company as much as possible. Prepare a document with their name, logo and basic company facts and bring it to the meeting. This shows that you understand their company and their needs.

Accounting

13. Pick your accountant carefully
When choosing an accountant, make sure that they're experienced, proactive, easy to talk to, knowledgeable about your type of business, local and helpful. It's best to interview at least three before choosing. Also, make sure you understand exactly how they'll be charging you.

14. Don't let it pile up
Record your expenses every day and file your receipts. If you let it pile up, it will be overwhelming and you'll probably give up. This applies to paperwork as well – try to take care of it as soon as it hits your desk.

15. Excel is your friend
Excel is an affordable and adaptable way to keep track of your expenses, invoices and budget. With a few simple formulas you can keep track of your finances easily.

16. Keep those receipts
You won't be able to claim back any expenses against tax unless you've got the receipts. Ensure you keep them all and categorise them to make life easier for your accountant.

17. Cash reserves
You never know when you'll run into a rough month where the jobs just aren't coming in. Try to save enough cash to pay yourself for three months without any income coming into the company. Overdrafts and credit cards are NOT the right answer.

18. Cash flow will kill you
One of the biggest dangers to the survival of your company is cash flow. Use *Excel* to plan your cash flow for the next three months. This enables you to see if you have a slow month coming up, meaning you can make allowances in advance before it's too late.

19. Know your goals
You'll never know if you're succeeding if you don't set goals for yourself. Don't just set financial goals though, set lifestyle goals for how you want to live. Words of warning: make sure your goals are achievable.

20. Take it seriously
Paying tax sucks. However, that doesn't mean you can ignore it. If you don't keep back money to pay your tax bill, you could be fined huge amounts and even end up in jail.

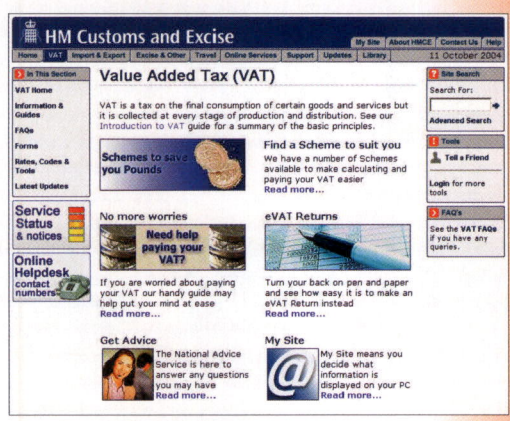
21. VAT registered?
Should you get VAT registered? The advantages include allowing you to claim back any VAT you've been charged while making your company look larger and more stable. The disadvantage is that you'll be required to file more paperwork.

22. Dividends
Many company directors pay themselves entirely in dividends, thus dodging income tax. Be warned, the Inland Revenue is wise to this and will most likely catch you. Make sure you take a reasonable salary along with your dividends.

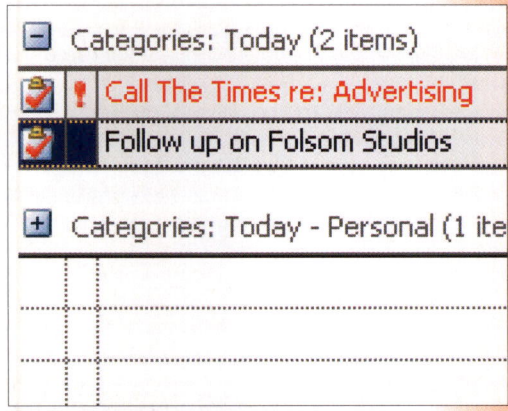
To-do lists

23. You've got to have one
In order to stay organised, you really need to have a to-do list. This will help you keep track of your daily work. Although it may feel restricting, it will keep you focused.

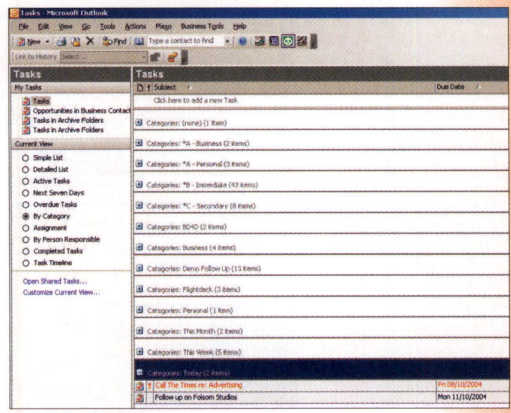
24. The never-ending list
As we mentioned, a to-do list is a must. However, they often grow out of control! The answer is making sure that your list is actually achievable. There's no use in listing ten things to be done today, when it's obvious you'll only have time for three.



Tip 21. Find out the benefits and disadvantages of being VAT registered at [w] www.hmce.gov.uk.

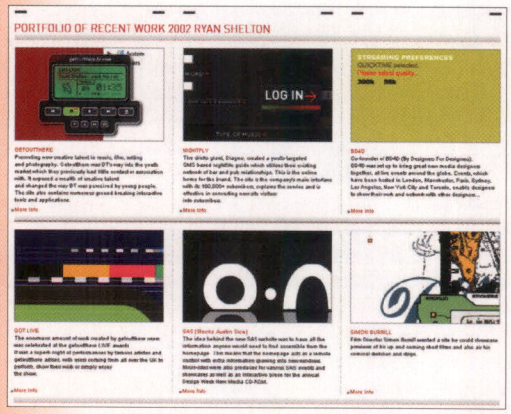


Tip 23. To-do lists will help you to stay focused on the jobs in hand.



Tip 25. Organise your workflow by putting your to-do list into categories on a daily basis.

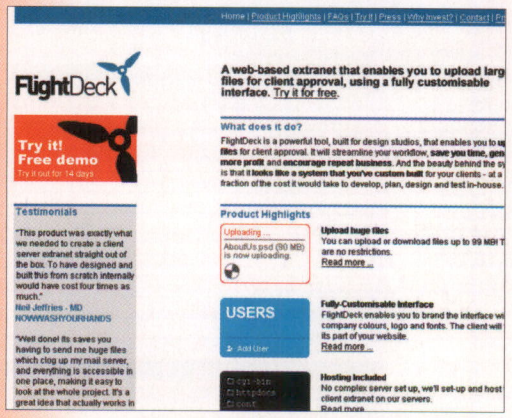
50 **business** tips



Tip 34. Your website is a portal for potential clients, so make sure it's designed by professionals.

HitBox Professional
Jump On The ROI Fast Track!
Sell More Products. Generate More Leads. Boost Advertising.
With HitBox Web Analytics, It's Simple!
Learn More
View Demo
Sign Up Now!
Web Analytics for Small Businesses

Tip 35. *HitBox Pro* is a good tool for monitoring how, and how many, people are using your site.



Tip 37. It's essential that your website is easy to use, or people will take their custom elsewhere.

25. Categorise

Spend the first 15 minutes of every day breaking your to-do list into categories. You should have three categories: 'Today — Business', 'Today — Personal', then 'A', 'B' and 'C'. Each day, take things from your 'A' list and put them in your 'Today — Business' and 'Today — Personal" categories. Then move Bs and Cs up into the A category. It's essential that you make sure your Today list is realistic.

26. Six things

Take your 'Today–Business' and 'Today–Personal' lists and prioritise them from 1 to 6. Don't move onto number 2 until you've completed number 1, and so on. This will prevent you from wasting your time on unimportant things.

27. Don't get distracted

The biggest danger to reaching your goals is getting distracted from the job in hand. Once you've got your to-do list sorted for the day, don't deviate from it, unless there's an emergency.

28. Personal versus business

Sorting your to-do list into 'Today–Business' and 'Today–Personal' will help you make sure you're not ignoring your personal life and loved ones. If you have one large Today category, the danger is that it's easy to let the personal things slip to the bottom.

Miscellaneous

29. Bounce ideas off others

After reviewing some of your 'amazing' ideas with friends, you might find they're completely unworkable or misguided. On the positive side, some ideas will be strengthened by this sharing process. Make sure you always get a second opinion before you proceed.

30. Do your research

Before you put a lot of your time and money into an idea, make sure you research it. Has anyone done it before? If so, did they succeed? Do you have competitors? How successful is their product?

31. Stay well-read

Even though you're busy, it's worth setting aside one hour a week to read your industry's periodicals. This keeps you in touch with what's going on and makes you aware of any new opportunities you can take advantage of.

32. Time for thinking

Ensure you make time to just sit back and process what's going on around you. This is vital to your mental well-being and the health of your company. After taking a moment to think, you'll often come up with new ideas, or realise you could do something differently, and better.

33. Just do it

You may be tempted to organise and prepare in order to put off the actual execution of an idea. If you find yourself stalling, take a deep breath and just throw yourself at it.

Web presence

34. Designed by a pro

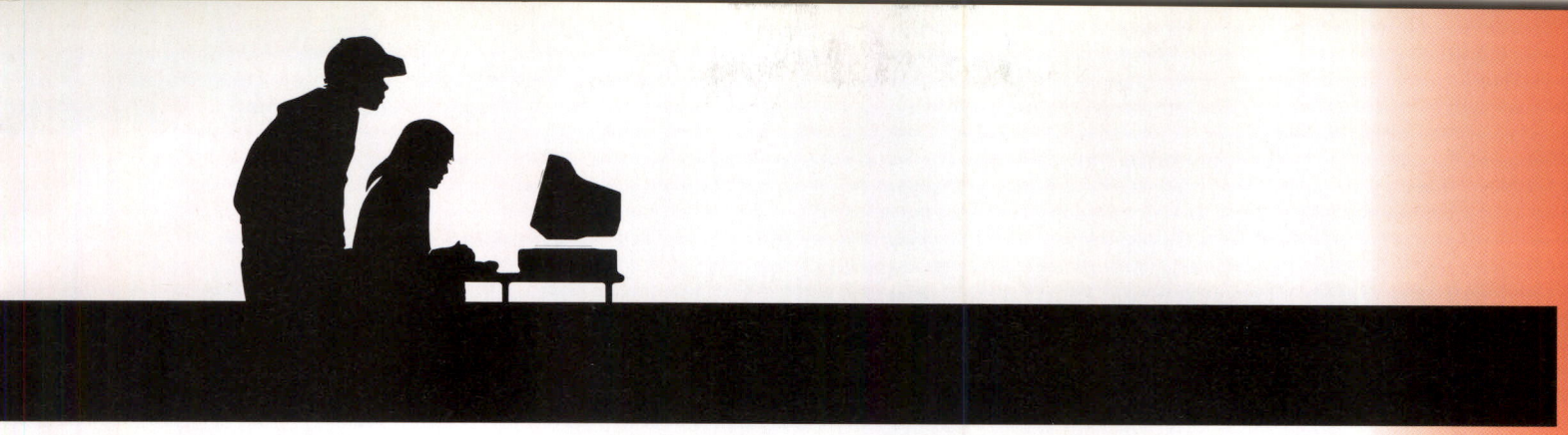
If your site looks dodgy, potential clients will immediately question your credibility. It will cost you around £3,000 to get a professional five-page website. However, make sure the designer is indeed a professional before handing over your hard-earned cash (if you don't want to design it yourself that is).

35. Measure your success

The only way you'll know if your site is helping your business, is if you measure how many hits it's receiving, where those hits are coming from, and which pages of your site are being viewed the most. An affordable tool to do this is *HitBox Pro* (see **[w]** www.hitboxpro.com). It's a cinch to implement as well.

36. Contact us

It's vital that you place your phone number and email address at the bottom of every page. This makes it easy for potential clients to contact you. Also, on your Contact page, add a map with instructions explaining how to find you.



37. Keep it simple
The easier your site is to use, the more clients will be inclined to visit it. Don't make the navigation overly clever or hard to find, because this will drive away potential clients.

38. Easy to update
Whether you build your site or pay a professional to complete the task for you, make sure it's easy to update. If it's a difficult thing to do, you'll be less likely to update it, thus making your site out of date quickly.

39. Make it clear
At the top of every page clearly state what the purpose of the page is. This gives an overview of the page content to those who are in a hurry. Also, make sure the title of the page is clearly visible so visitors know where they are.

40. Don't lie about your size
This doesn't just apply to your sex life – it's important for your business too. If you're only a one-man band, don't pretend you're a multi-national company. When your potential clients find out you're just a small organisation, they'll be less likely to trust you.

41. Where to host your website
Whoever you choose to host your website, make sure they have great customer service. This will be worth its weight in gold when something goes wrong with the site. Try Rackspace ([w] www.rackspace.co.uk) or one of the hosting companies featured on pages 60–65.

42. Update it regularly
If a potential customer notices that your site is out of date, they'll immediately question the validity of your claims. It's a good idea to have an online News section and to update it once a week.

43. Make it work for you
When deciding what to place on your website, try to put yourself in your customer's shoes. What would they want to know? What would pique their interest in your product or service? By approaching your web presence in this way, your site will work as a sales person for you.

Budgets

44. The importance of budgeting
It's essential that you know what your monthly budget is. This will help you determine how much you need to bring in each month in order to cover your costs and make a profit.

45. Record your expenses
If you find that your outgoings are over your budget, cut back your spending. This will keep you out of trouble in terms of cash flow. If you're not recording your expenses, you'll never know.

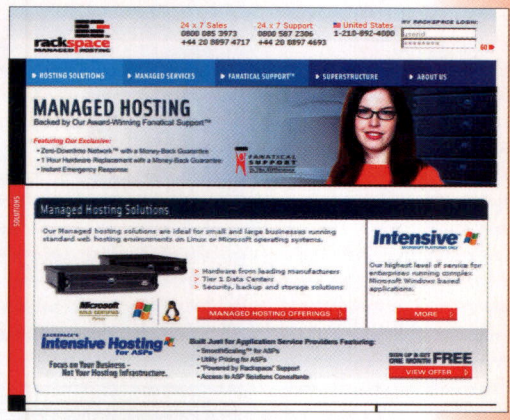
46. Don't overspend
No matter how much you think you need a shiny new G5, if it's not in the budget, don't get it. This often requires gritting your teeth and reminding yourself that if you work hard, you'll be able to afford it sometime soon.

47. Be realistic
A budget is absolutely useless if it's not based in reality. The best way to set budgets is estimate your monthly expenses and then add 30 per cent on top. This allows for any unseen expenses.

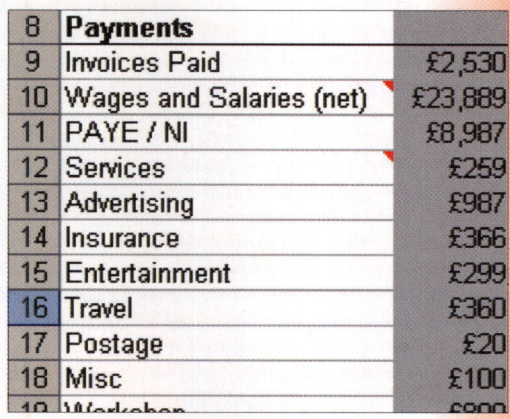
48. Save for slow times
Make sure you add a 'Savings' category to your budget. This is money you can keep in the company for a rainy day or if you're hit with any unforeseen bills.

49. Plan ahead
Plan your budget at least three months ahead of schedule. This will enable you to start saving for any large upcoming expenses. It will also make you feel less guilty for spending the money, because you've planned it and know why you're spending it.

50. The 'Miscellaneous' category
You're bound to notice bizarre expenses that you couldn't have planned for, or things that just don't fit into any simple category. For these outgoings, use a 'Miscellaneous' category. The amount of cash you put in this category will depend on the size of your company. CAP

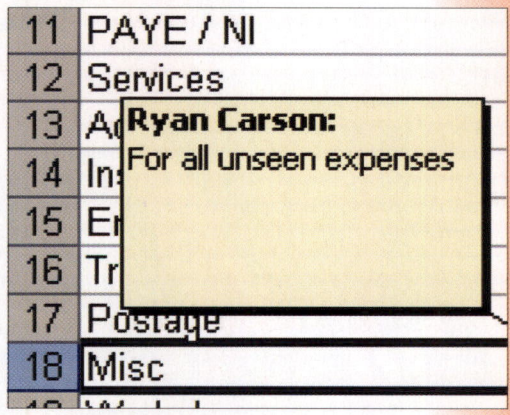


Tip 41. When looking for a hosting service, choose a company that offers extensive customer support.



8	**Payments**	
9	Invoices Paid	£2,530
10	Wages and Salaries (net)	£23,889
11	PAYE / NI	£8,987
12	Services	£259
13	Advertising	£987
14	Insurance	£366
15	Entertainment	£299
16	Travel	£360
17	Postage	£20
18	Misc	£100

Tip 44. Monthly budgeting is the key to a financially successful business.



Tip 50. You should always have a 'Miscellaneous' category for expenses that aren't easy to categorise.

Find a host and build an online portfolio

Office space – check. Business plan – check. Financing – check. Net hosting? Ah. Just where do you start when it comes to your web presence?

Illustration by Mauro Gatti [w] www.thebrainbox.com

DESIGN
ISINESS

Should you want any proof that the web and design industry has bounced back from the dot com boom, you need only look at the number of companies offering Web-hosting services. There are thousands of them all round the world, each apparently offering a perfect combination of services for what seems like a ridiculously cheap price.

The reason is obvious: any business, no matter how large or small, should have its own website these days. As a designer, you certainly need one, even if it's just to show off your portfolio and provide contact details. Finding a reliable host may seem like just another chore when it comes to setting up a business, but it's an important choice in the long run, affecting both your image and your potential income.

Before you start shopping around for a host, you should determine which sort you need. This really boils down to the content you intend to display on your site, and how much you expect it to expand in the years ahead. Don't underestimate the growth of your business; leave yourself plenty of room to grow without being tied in to a restrictive deal.

Shared servers

By far the most popular (and cheapest) option is the shared or virtual server. As the name implies, you share this with many other users, although in practical terms it appears to be a dedicated server. There are a couple of disadvantages to this: any shared server will be slower than a dedicated one, and you'll have much less control over any scripts or other software you want to install for your site.

On the upside, such servers are fine for straightforward portfolio sites, or anything that doesn't rely on complex server-side programming. They're also cheap, often less than £5/$10 a month. Be cautious of any company that demands you pay for a year's worth of service in advance on a shared server, though. You may find yourself stuck with a bad host for a year, while the company already has your money.

The next step up is the dedicated server and variants thereof. These are far more expensive (£100/month or more) for the simple reason that it's all yours. You can customise it as much as you like, install any application, run multiple sites and generally serve far greater amounts of data at far greater speeds. Unless you need that sort of power, though, dedicated servers are an expensive luxury.

Whichever type of server you go for, you should expect a reasonable number of tools to help you manage your website, although these will vary with the host and the monthly fee.

"I would also want a range of services included with any plan I signed up to," believes Nicholas da Silva, Founder and Manager of Zoolook Entertainment at **[w]** www.zoolook.com. Nicholas elaborates: "These services should include site statistics tools that enable you to evaluate traffic to your site. The plan should have mail options that include multiple email accounts and a Web-based email for checking your email when you're on the road. It should also offer unlimited password-protected FTP uploads and

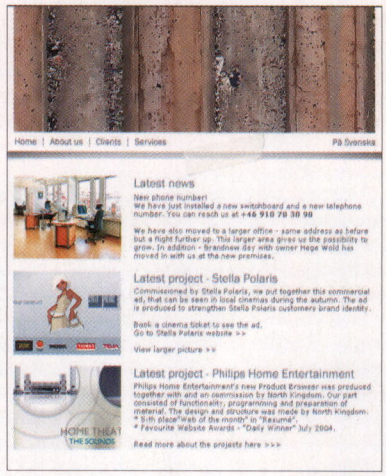
Do it yourself?

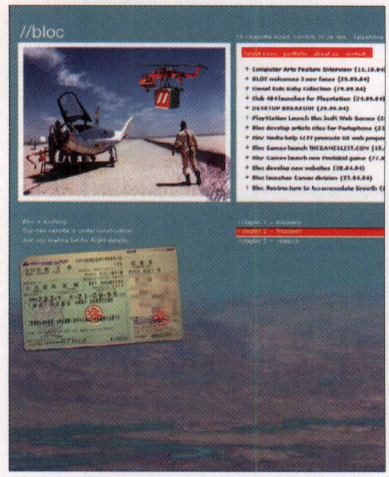
You could – but be prepared for a whole world of complication...

There is a third option for hosting: do it yourself. This is easily the most complex and, initially at least, most expensive way of hosting, but it guarantees you complete control and flexibility.

Digital design agency Bloc Media decided to host its own sites after bad experiences during the company's fledgling years. "We basically hire rack space and the 'pipe' and remotely manage all the boxes ourselves," says Bloc Co-founder Rick Palmer. "About three years ago we did rent some space from a third-party host, but we found the experience extremely frustrating, constantly finding ourselves on support lines, in queues and reporting faults with 'trouble tickets' and so on."

Stefan Thomson of Thomson Mediautveckling agrees, though he hasn't abandoned third party hosting altogether. "Of course, it requires a lot of knowledge and money – it's definitely not the cheapest way," he says. "But we also have quite a few websites at other hosting companies, mainly for one reason: location. If the website's audience is in the UK, then we'll usually get a host located in the UK. Closeness to the customer makes a big difference in download speed and availability of the server."





Larger sites, such as Thomson Mediautveckling ([w] www.thomson.nu) and Bloc Media ([w] www.blocmedia.com), generally host their own pages – although they may still use third-party hosting for clients.

script and extension support for SQL databases, PHP and Active Server Pages."

Cost considerations

Web hosting is a fiercely competitive market, and prices can be ridiculously low. In many cases, these are too good to be true. "We once tried a company that offered Web hosting for such a small amount of money that it was almost unbelievable – $2 a month," says Stefan Thomson, Managing Director of Swedish web company Thomson Mediautveckling.

"The client wanted this because cheap is good – right? Wrong... When the site was launched it was unreachable for long periods of time and the support never answered our emails. When the client decided to move to another host, it took two months of email conversation between us, the hosting company and finally an override of the DNS information from the NIC to get it done."

Be wary of hidden charges too. Storage – the amount of data you can actually host on a site – is ridiculously cheap these days; bandwidth isn't. Bandwidth is the total amount of information which the host will allow to be transferred from your site over a given period – say, 5GB a month.

Determining how much bandwidth you have to play with is vital. Never believe claims of 'unlimited bandwidth with no extra

There's no such thing...

...as a free host. Well actually there is – but are they worth it?

The cheapest hosting packages are actually free. They are sometimes supported by enforced advertising, which doesn't exactly project a professional image. "Free hosts with advertising are the kiss of death for designers," believes Jason Arber of Pixelsurgeon. "It might be great for your mum's sewing circle, but you can't scream Serious Designer with pop-ups appearing every few seconds."

Heart Internet

Website: www.heartinternet.co.uk

Package: 2500MB storage, 100MB transfer limit/month and 1000 mail boxes. No adverts.

Designer Servers

Website: www.dsvr.co.uk

Package: 20MB storage, 250MB transfer limit/month and 20 mail boxes. No ads. Only available as a starter package to commercial web designers.

Portland Communications

Website: www.portland.co.uk

Package: 15MB storage, 100MB transfer limit/month. No ads. Requires existing domain name.

50megs.com

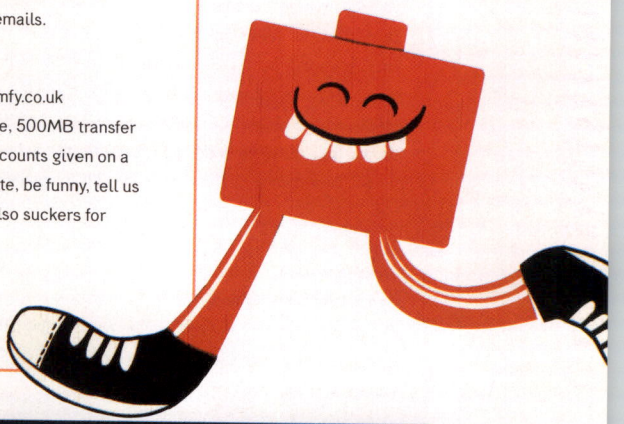
Website: www.50megs.com

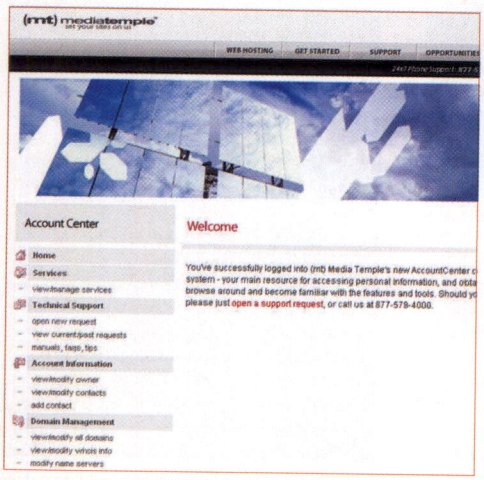
Package: 50MB storage, 500MB transfer limit/month, 0.25MB file size limit. Must host advertisements and ad emails.

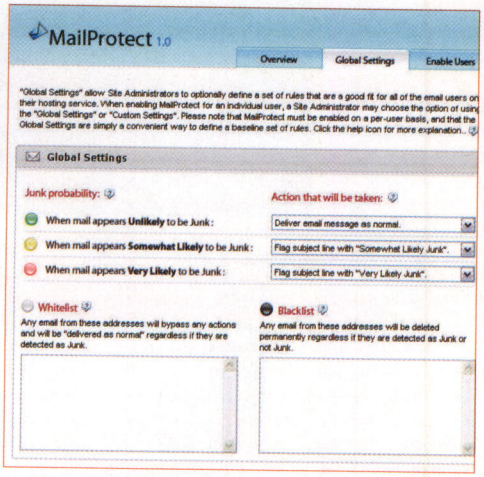
ProperComfy

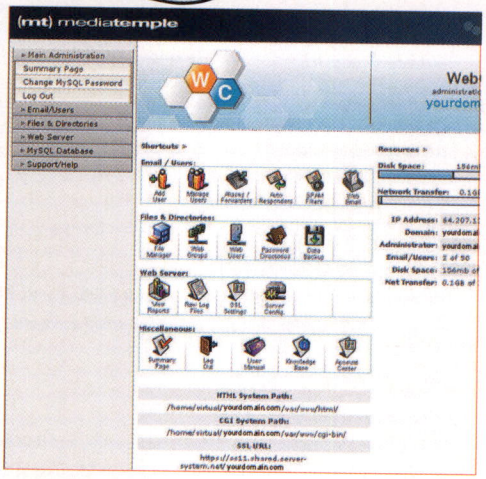
Website: www.propercomfy.co.uk

Package: 200MB storage, 500MB transfer limit/month, no ads. Accounts given on a selective basis: "Be polite, be funny, tell us about yourself... We're also suckers for pretty design."

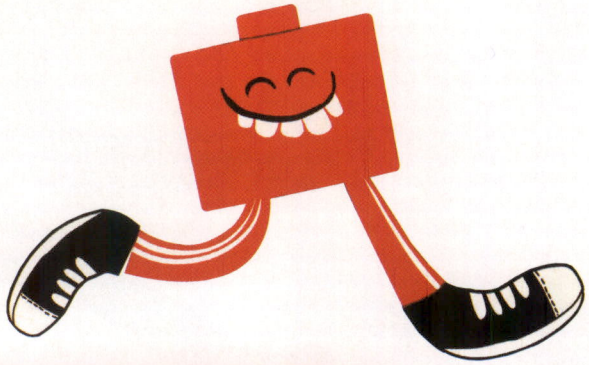





MailProtect 1.0
Overview
Global Settings
Enable Users
Global Settings
Junk probability:
Action that will be taken:
When mail appears Unlikely to be Junk:
Deliver email message as normal.
When mail appears Somewhat Likely to be Junk:
Flag subject line with "Somewhat Likely Junk".
When mail appears Very Likely to be Junk:
Flag subject line with "Very Likely Junk".
Whitelist
Blacklist



Every decent web-hosting service should provide user-friendly controls for managing your account. These examples are from (mt) Media Temple.



Hosts with the most

Here's a selected list of popular hosts. Remember, there are many more out there...

fasthosts

Website: www.fasthosts.co.uk

Specialised for designers? No, but Windows Media streaming.

Packages and price: Shared hosting starts at £3.99/month, with 750MB storage, unlimited transfer limits and 200 email addresses.

(mt) Media Temple

Website: www.mediatemple.net

Specialised for designers? Yes

Packages and price: (ss) Shared Server, three levels starting at $7.95/month for 250MB storage, 15GB transfer limit and 100 email addresses. (as) Appliance Server, three levels beginning at $49.95/month for 4GB storage and 100GB transfer limit. (ds) Dedicated Server on Linux ($495/month) or Windows ($575/month), with 72GB storage and 500GB transfer.

Acta Divina

Website: www.actadivina.com

Specialised for designers? Partly

Packages and price: Freeform Regular Web Hosting (BSX) offers customisable storage and transfer limits, starting at C$0.015/MB for storage and C$10/GB for transfer.

Designer Servers

Website: www.dsvr.co.uk

Specialised for designers? Yes

Packages and price: Share hosting starts at £170/year, with 150MB storage, 5GB transfer limit and 150 email addresses.

Lunarpages

Website: www.lunarpages.com

Specialised for designers? No

Packages and price: Shared hosting starts at $7.95/month, with 1000MB storage, 40GB transfer limit and 'unlimited' email accounts.

WebFusion

Website: www.webfusion.co.uk

Specialised for designers? No, but offers streaming and RealAudio support.

Packages and price: Shared hosting starts at £5.95/month, with 600MB storage, 7GB transfer and 150 email accounts. Also supports ASP and .NET.

charges' – it's simply not feasible in financial terms. Many hosts charge a flat fee for a capped amount, then charge extra per megabyte over that limit. That's a perfectly fair system, but make sure you know what the extra charge is. Even if you don't think you'll ever go over the limit, it can happen at the most unexpected times – particularly if your site gets linked or is featured in a magazine, for example.

Some companies specialise in media or designer hosting, as opposed to the run-of-the-mill homepage and small business sites many others offer. "The advantage is that they have very good solutions for streaming media and so on," explains Stefan. Such 'designer' hosting sites should also be much more knowledgeable about supporting specialist applications and are geared to high-bandwidth graphics use.

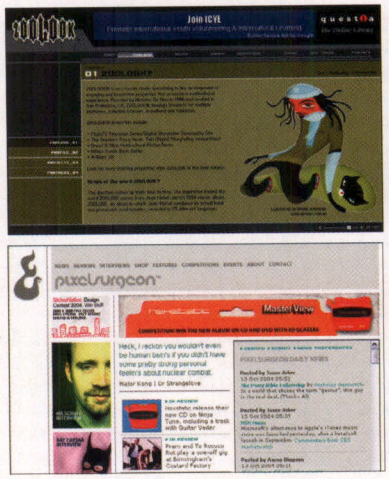
"But on the other hand, this technology is not a secret," he says. "So ask other hosting companies – most of them out there have the same functionality. They just don't shout about it as openly as, say, (mt) Media Temple." Nevertheless, such companies build their reputation on providing a service to a particular community, and that specialism can be important. "The fact that (mt) Media Temple is well regarded in the design community assures me that I'm in good company," believes Nicholas da Silva. "The CEO at the ad agency I once worked at told me that if you can pick one thing in life to do and be the best at it, you will be very successful. That's (mt) Media Temple!"

Jason Arber of Pixelsurgeon cautions against me-tooism. "Many designers see that larger sites, such as Pixelsurgeon, have free hosting deals with people such as (mt) Media Temple and Acta Divina and they want a slice of that pie," he says. "Some designers want the kudos that being hosted by (mt) and Acta Divina can bring: they see their favourite sites being hosted by these businesses and want the same cool factor. (mt) are the iPod or Sony or (insert your favourite cool brand here) of hosting companies!"

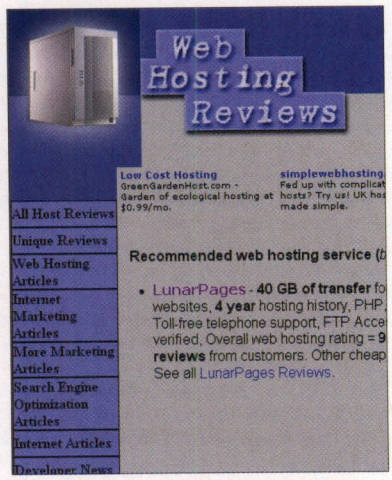
Reliability and support

The most important aspect of any hosting service is reliability. It doesn't matter if the service costs a fiver a year – if it's not up and running, your work won't get seen.

"I once hosted by a cheaper company before making the switch to (mt) Media Temple," says Nicholas. "My former hosting company would be down every month with no reason or explanation. You would have to sit and wait until you were back online. And



Most leading designers such as Zoolook and Pixelsurgeon tend to be hosted by (mt) Media Temple, a company which carries particular cachet.


Web Hosting Reviews
Low Cost Hosting
GreenGardenHost.com - Garden of ecological hosting at $0.99/mo.
simplewebhosting
All Host Reviews
Unique Reviews
Web Hosting Articles
Internet Marketing Articles
More Marketing Articles
Search Engine Optimization Articles
Internet Articles
Developer News
Recommended web hosting service (
LunarPages - 40 GB of transfer fo
websites, 4 year hosting history, PHP,
Toll-free telephone support, FTP Acce
verified, Overall web hosting rating = 9
reviews from customers. Other cheap
See all LunarPages Reviews.

Peer review sites can be a good source of info – but make sure they're independent, as is Web Hosting Unleashed, [w] www.webhostingunleashed.com.

"Look on support forums to gauge the general level of satisfaction and number of problems"

if you were down on a Friday evening, you would be down for the weekend."

Many hosting companies make extravagant claims about the uptime and security of their servers. With well-respected names it's easier to believe these claims, but ultimately you only have each company's word for it. Unfortunately, there's no simple way to verify typical claims of 99.9 per cent uptime or the like without actually setting up an account first. (Various companies such as NetMechanic, [w] www.netmechanic.com, can monitor your site's uptime, but that's an extra expense.)

So, when making a shortlist of hosting companies, be sure you know each one's policy on downtime and possible reimbursements. Do they have any specific guarantees, and if so, will you be compensated for downtime? Get this in writing, or make sure it's included in any service conditions.

A company's level of support, whether for downtime or other problems, is also vital. Is there any free support for minor problems? When do you start paying for it, and how much? Is it available at all times? It's a good idea to send an email to the company's customer support section and see how quickly they respond. If you're feeling particularly adventurous, you could also phone them at unusual hours (assuming they offer 24-hour support) to see how helpful they are.

Do your research

Word of mouth is powerful, and customer references can make all the difference to a company's reputation. So do your research: scour the Web for any particularly good/bad feedback the company has received. Look on their support forums, if they have one, to gauge the general level of satisfaction and number of problems.

Alternatively, you can go straight to the source: existing customers. Any good company should be able to provide you with a list of testimonials (although these are less helpful, since they'll obviously all be positive) and references. While you shouldn't expect major international design companies to answer you, those who have had a particularly bad time (or a good one) will most likely be only too willing to tell you about it.

Ultimately, choosing a host is much like shopping for a new car or house. If you do your homework and don't just rush in at the first tempting offer, chances are you'll be more satisfied in the long run. And, more importantly, your business will be off to a good solid start. ca-p

Over the page >>

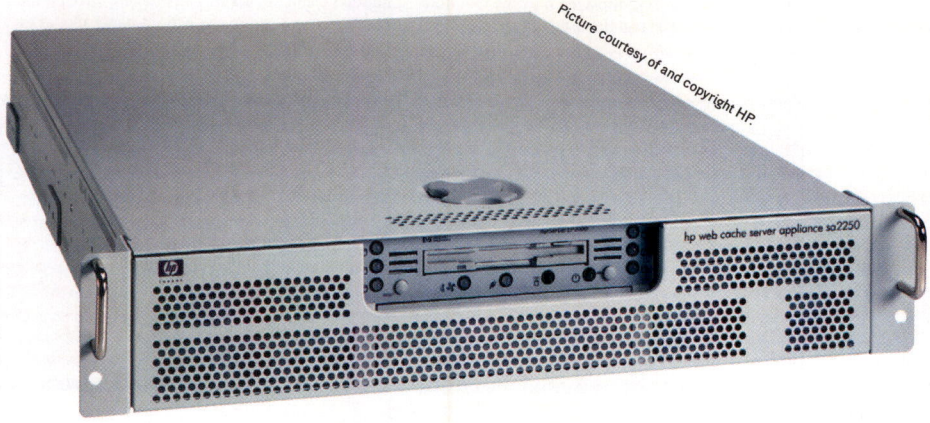
BUILD AN ONLINE PORTFOLIO

Find out how to create a simple yet impressive portfolio website...

When you're planning your own website, the first thing to think about is the main aim of your business and the kind of people you're addressing. Decide whether you want to impress them or fascinate them, or simply show all your works. The interface will be based on this decision, being either experimental or plain and useful.

For the following tutorial, we opt for a simply structured interface placed in a fresh and animated graphic context. The simpler the site is, the less the waiting times for the user. This means visitors will pay more attention to the works and explore them more thoroughly. >

Some hosting companies such as Heart Internet offer free packages. These can be a good way to get your site started, but avoid the ones with ads.



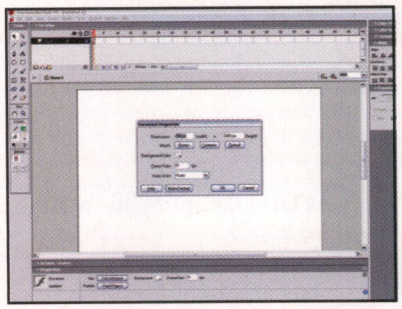
Web-hosting servers, such as this HP Web Cache Server Appliance SA2250, come in many different configurations (number of processors and amount of RAM).

Part 1: Starting out

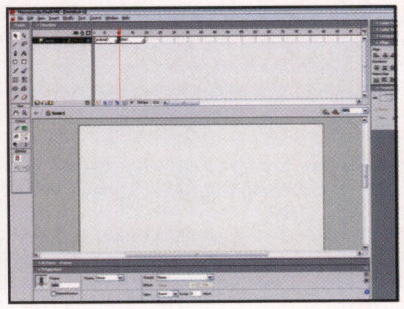
Create a *Flash* file and plan the graphic structure...

Expertise provided by Mauro Gatti, Creative Director of The Brainbox. **[e]** mauro@thebrainbox.com, **[w]** www.thebrainbox.com. Additional expertise provided by Lorenzo Manfredi, Technology Manager. **[e]** lorenzo@thebrainbox.com, **[w]** www.thebrainbox.com.

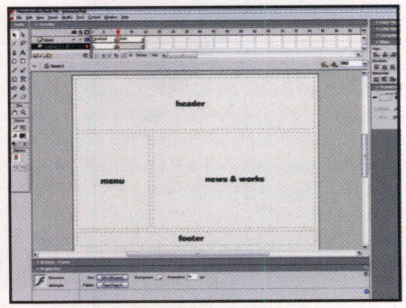
All the components needed to complete this tutorial can be found on the cover CD in the Software\Tutorials\Tutorial files\Tutorial files\All\Online portfolio folder. All the ActionScript can be found in the Portfolio_code.txt file in the same folder.



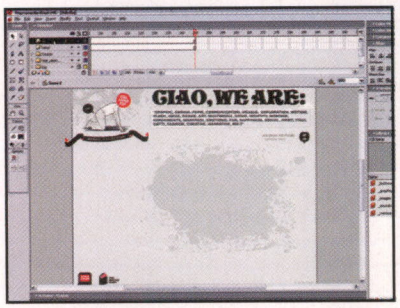
1 Open Macromedia *Flash*, and select New from the File menu. Choose Modify>Document and you can set up Dimensions, the Background Colour and the Frame Rate. Set the Frame Rate to 51fps. If you don't plan to use videos or particularly heavy vector-based effects, you won't have any problems in using such a high frame rate. If you do want to use videos, you should set it to 25fps.



2 Leave some empty frames on the timeline to be occupied later with a preloader, and start working on the graphic contents, starting from frame 13. Place the mouse on frame 13 and click once, then select Blank Keyframe from the Insert menu. Do the same with the first frame and from the Properties panel enter the name of the two frames: 'preload' and 'start'. Now you know where to put your preload and start your animation.

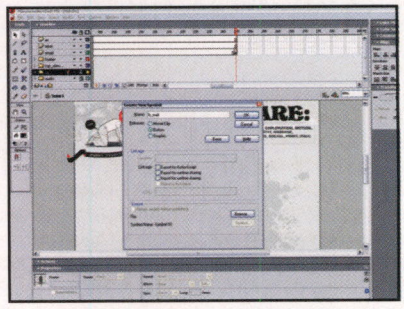


3 Use the Rectangle tool to draw some rectangles on the stage to indicate where the site's elements will go. We divide up the page as follows: a header containing a logotype and intro text, a space to host the navigation menu (under the logotype), a central space to host the news and the external files loading, and a footer for special contents. Obviously you can use more frames in order to insert any other introductory animations.

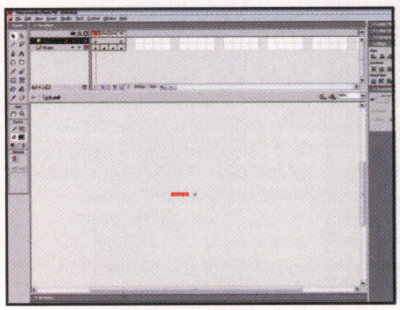


4 The structure is plain and simple, but can be enriched by your creativity without changing its usefulness. Just remember the menu must always be in a very clear and visible position so that it doesn't complicate the navigation, and the place where our work will be displayed must be free from elements that could steal the user's attention.

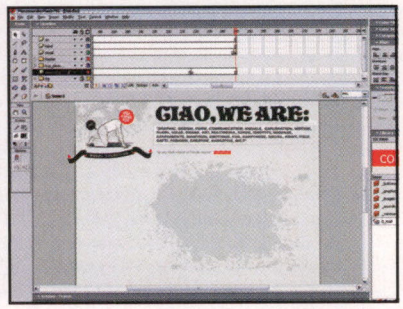
5 To insert a new layer, go to Insert>Layer, then select Blank Keyframe to insert graphic creations or animations. Enter all animations and graphic elements in the Header area created earlier. In the last frame, where the animation ends, add another Blank Keyframe. After having selected the same keyframe, go to the Actions panel and, in the text area, write: stop();



6 It's important that visitors to your site can contact you with the click of a button. We decided rather than make users click on a Contacts area, we would place the email link directly on the stage in a prominent position. To create an email button, make a new layer called 'email', and a new Blank Keyframe. Click once on the frame and select New Symbol from the Insert menu. Call it 'b_mail' and click the 'Button' Behaviour. Click OK.



7 Create a new layer called Text, and call the existing layer, Shape. Create a text area in the first keyframe of the Text layer. Write 'contact us'. In the Shape layer, create and place some rectangles in the keyframe Up/Over/Down/Hit. Those frames are the events of the button, so at least Up and Over must be different to show the user interaction.



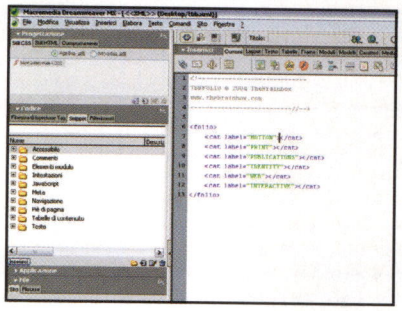
8 Come back to the main movie and open the library (Window>Library). Select the button b_mail and drag it on the stage, making sure you place it in the empty keyframe created in the email layer. In the same layer and next to the button just created, insert a text area saying "For any work related or friendly request" (or whatever you want).

9 Click on the button and open the Actions panel, then write the code to make an email link:

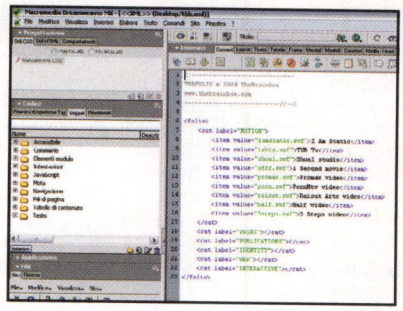
```
on(release){
      getURL("mailto:
contact@thebrainbox.com");
```

Part 2: XML and menu development

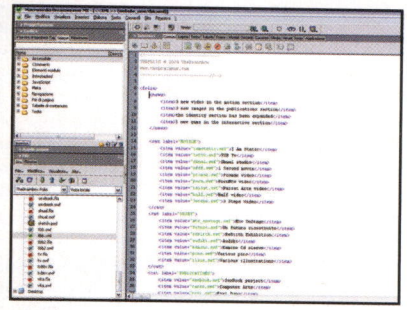
Create XML files in *Dreamweaver* and set up your menus in *Flash*...



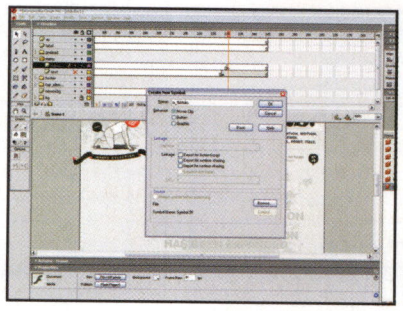
1 To link your *Flash* portfolio with an external XML source, you must create a TAGS structure to host your portfolio. Here, we use *Dreamweaver* to create our file tbb.xml. You need to define your portfolio categories – each category should have an attribute called 'label' (as above) which contains the category's name. See Step 10 in the Portfolio_code.txt document on the cover CD.



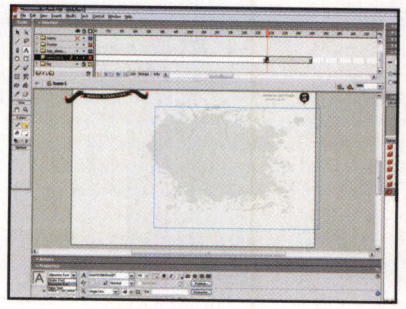
2 Once you've defined your categories, you need to define each single piece of work in every category following the same principle. This time, use an attribute called 'value' to identify the path of the external swf file containing the work details. Now insert the button labels as text nodes into each single <item>. See Step 11 in the Portfolio_code.txt document on the cover CD.



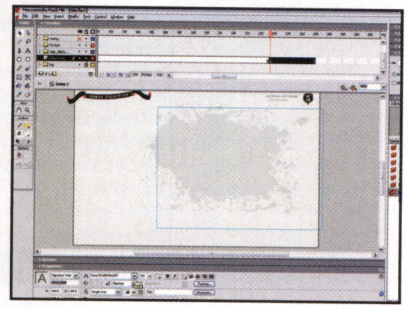
3 Having defined the portfolio, you now need to define the news. News must be placed into the same XML file – in this way, all the external data will be in just one file. See Step 12 in the Portfolio_code.txt document on the cover CD.



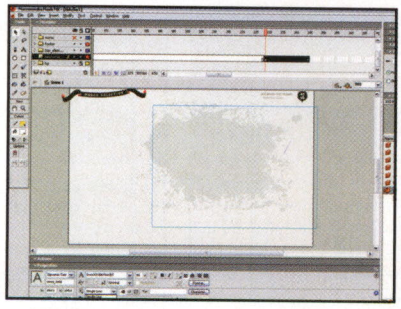
4 Now move on to the menu's development in Macromedia *Flash*. Two *Flash* elements are needed: a movieclip hosting the dynamic menu and a dynamic text-field to host the news. You need to create a movieclip and drag it from the library to the stage. Go to Insert>New Symbol from the main menu and select the 'Movieclip' Behaviour. Then give it a name (here, we've called it m_tbbfolio).



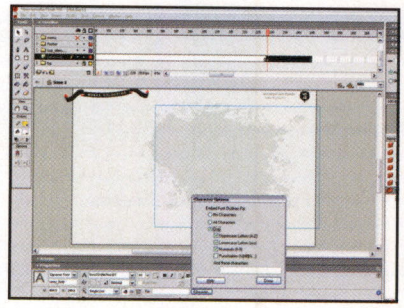
5 Use the Text tool to draw a text field (you can use custom dimensions). Then set it up as Dynamic Text in the drop-down menu on the left side of the Properties panel.



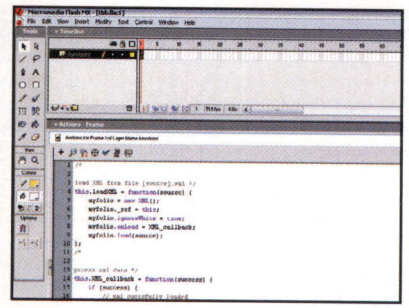
6 Now call the text field 'news_field' so you can control it easily with ActionScript. Insert the name in the text field under Dynamic Text in the drop-down menu on the left side of the Properties panel.



7 Now set the text field to Multiline to automatically position the text on more lines.



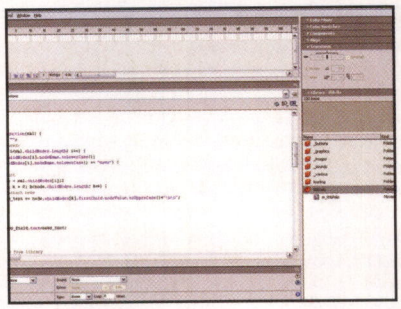
8 If you've chosen not to use a system font, you need to embed the font in your *Flash* file. Click on the Character button in the Properties panel and embed Uppercase Letters (A-Z), Lowercase Letters (a-z), Numerals (0-9). Font embedding can be very heavy on Flash files, so we often embed only the characters we need.



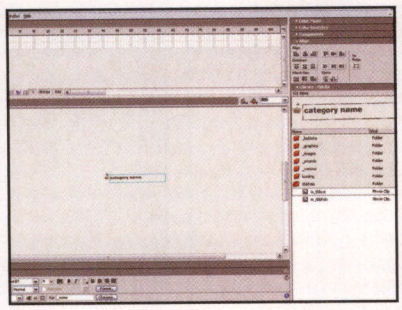
9 Select the movieclip created for the menu. Create the function for loading the XML file we created in Steps 1 and 2 above. See Step 18a in the Portfolio_code.txt file on the cover CD. Then create the function that will save the loaded XML data, launch the creation of the menu (first level), launch the function for putting the news into our dynamic text field. See Step 18b on the cover CD.

Part 3: Writing functions in ActionScript

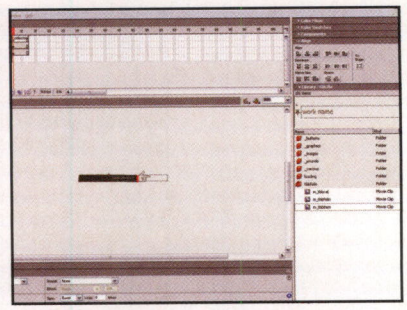
Create functions to launch the different categories of your site...



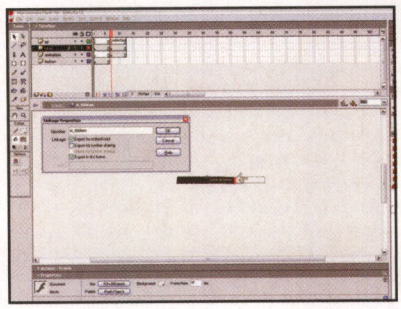
1 Now write the 'create news' function that will be launched at the end of the XML file loading. This function launches the 'news' node into the loaded document, and puts the news text into your text field. See Step 19 in the Portfolio_code.txt document on the CD for the ActionScript code.



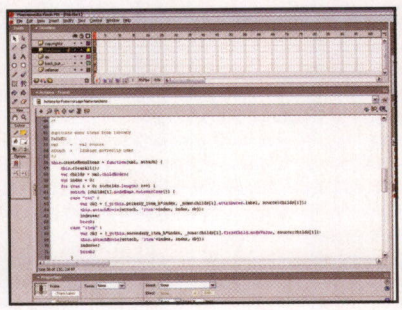
2 Before writing the function for the menu creation, create two button templates: one for the categories list and one for the works list. The first button is actually a movieclip (m_tbbcat) that contains a dynamic text field and a *Flash* button for the user to click. To create this text field do the same as with the news_field. Set a variable name for the text field by writing it into the var field located in the lower-right corner of the Properties panel.



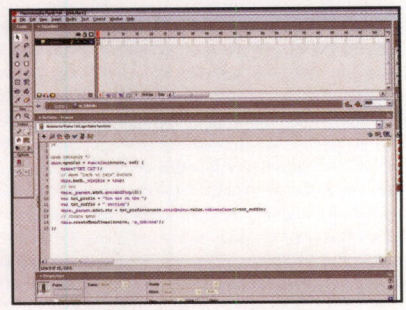
3 Create the second button template (m_tbbitem) using the same steps as for m_tbbcat. Insert 12 blank keyframes into your movieclip using the Insert>Blank Keyframe label. Then select frame 6 and go to Insert>Keyframe, then give a name (selected) to this keyframe by filling the text area in the lower-left corner of the Properties panel. Starting from the sixth frame, you can insert a different graphic to underline the selected status.



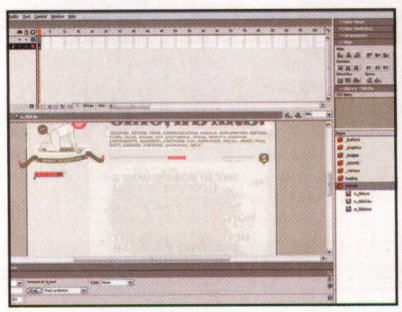
4 Once you've created those buttons, you need to find a way to duplicate them during the movie execution. Right-click on each button and select Linkage to see the Linkage Properties window. Insert a unique name such as m_tbbitem). Select the 'Export for ActionScript' checkbox and the 'Export in first frame' checkbox.



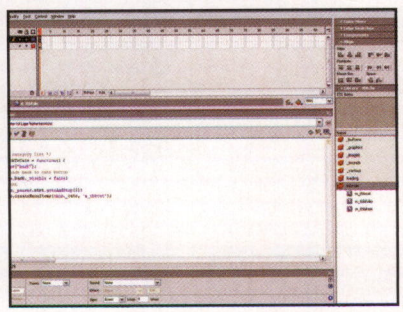
5 Now create the function to duplicate the elements created in the previous three steps, to create the navigation menu in real time. Go back to movieclip m_tbbfolio and click on the layer containing the ActionScript. This function is created once and is used for both the creation of the first (categories) and the second (works) menu. See Step 23 in the Portfolio_code.txt document on the CD.



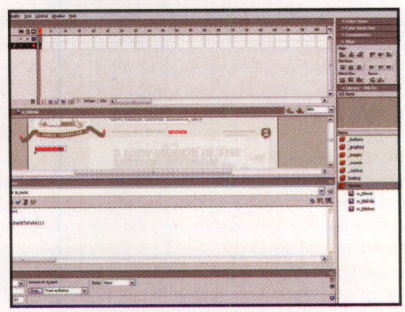
6 On the same frame, prepare another function called 'openCat', which will be launched at every click over each category button. The openCat function launches the 'createMenuItems' function by passing different parameters which will ask this function to create the works list contained in the selected category. See Step 24 in the Portfolio_code.txt document on the cover CD.



7 To complete the menu functionalities, insert a button that will bring you back from the works list to the categories list. Create the button as previously explained, place it on the stage and name it 'back'. This name will be used by the ActionScript to check its visibility.



8 Now you need to prepare the function that will be launched when the back button is clicked. Go to the layer that contains the ActionScript, open the ActionScript panel and write the backToCats function. See Step 26 in the Portfolio_code.txt document on the cover CD for the code.

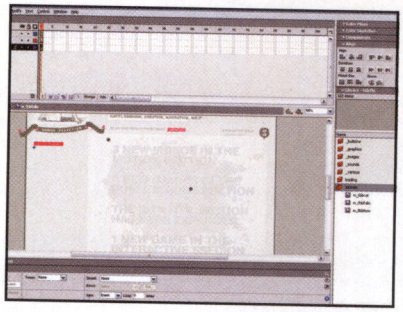


9 At this point, set up the back button to launch the backToCats function when clicked. Add the following code:

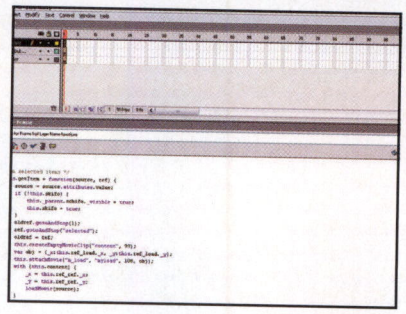
```
on(release)
{
        this.backToCats();
}
```

Part 4: Creating buttons, sounds and a preloader

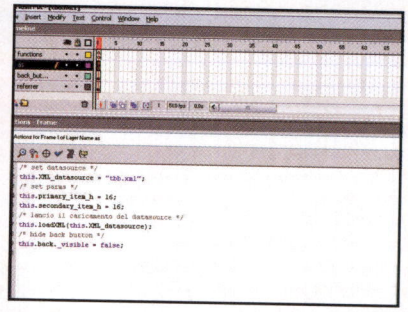
Tie up all the loose ends to make your website interactive...



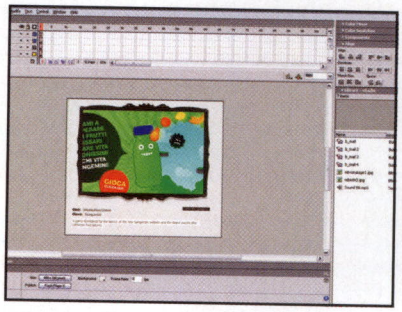
1 Now you need to set up the button template (works) to make it load an external swf file (defined into the XML) when clicked. First, create two empty movieclips on the stage following the same method used before and place them on the stage. The first movieclip, called ref_ref, will host the loaded external swf file; the second one, called ref_load, will be the reference for the preloading bar positioning.



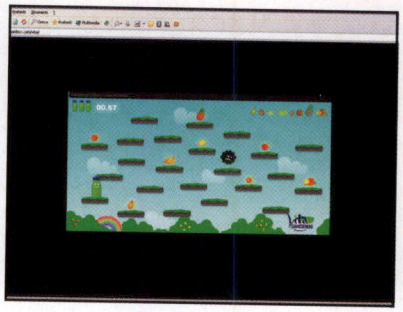
2 Go to the layer hosting the ActionScript and write the function 'getItem'. This function extracts the attribute 'value' from the loaded XML object which contains the swf file path. Then it changes the clicked button status to 'selected'. Finally it starts the loading of the external swf file into the empty movieclip 'ref_ref' and loads into the movieclip 'ref_load', the preloading bar (taken from the library). See Step 29 in Portfolio_code.txt.



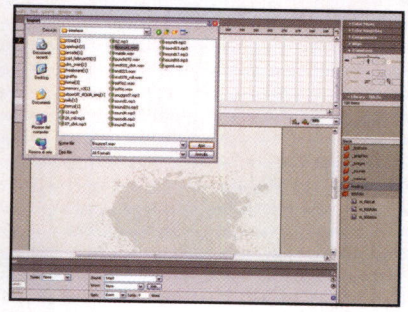
3 To initialise the menu, create a new layer called 'as'. In the first frame of the layer, insert the menu working parameters as soon as it appears on the stage (use the Actions panel). See Step 30 in the Portfolio_code.txt document on the cover CD.



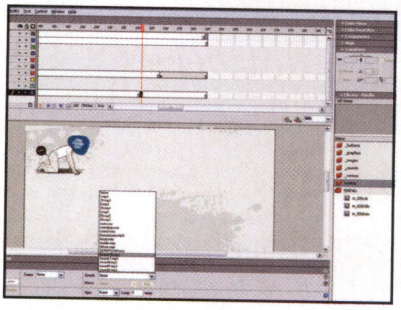
4 Having made a selection of the most interesting works, you need to produce an external swf movie specific for each work. In this way you can manage personalised creative solutions for each creation and highlight every difference.



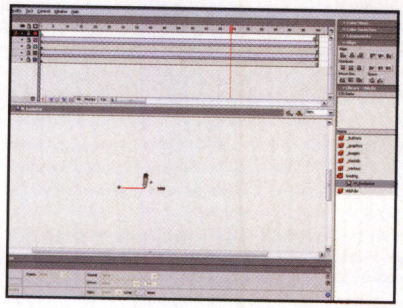
5 You can set up a 'View the Project' button associated with an ActionScript function that will open another work's detail. For videos or entertainment works, it's best to set up some external pages in which to show each single production.



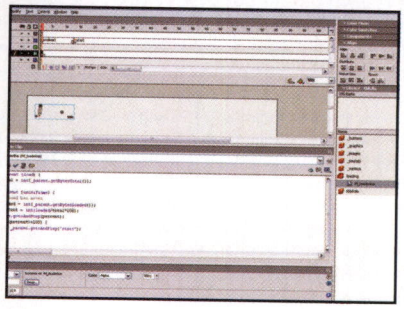
6 To insert some audio effects into your *Flash* video, you must create a new layer containing the keyframe which will host the audio effect. Now use File>Import from the main menu to import the audio file into your library.



7 Go to the keyframe created in the previous step and select the audio file previously imported using the drop-down menu on the right-corner of the Properties panel. You can repeat this operation many times to insert different audio effects in many different positions. To manage your video and audio contents properly, keep a tidy timeline by grouping the layers into different folders and using a clever structure for layers and objects.



8 Create a classic preloading system by creating a movieclip (m_loaderbar) with 100 frames telling the loading status from 0 to 100 per cent. Then create an animation that goes from frame 1 to frame 100. Create a new 'preload' layer on your main timeline. Place the movieclip m_loaderbar on the first frame of the timeline and insert a blank keyframe on the second frame (Insert>Keyframe) to be sure that the loading status disappears once the movie starts.



9 Now write the ActionScript code for the management of the loading status. Click once on the preload movieclip and insert the correct code into the Actions panel (Step 36 in the Portfolio_code.txt file on the CD). The percentage of the loading is calculated by considering the loaded bytes and the total bytes. Once the loading percentage is calculated, the 100 frames of animation progress with the corresponding number of frames. ca-p

Dealing with clients

Securing clients and keeping them are tasks design houses encounter on a day-to-day basis. We advise you how to secure your first job and then keep them rolling in…

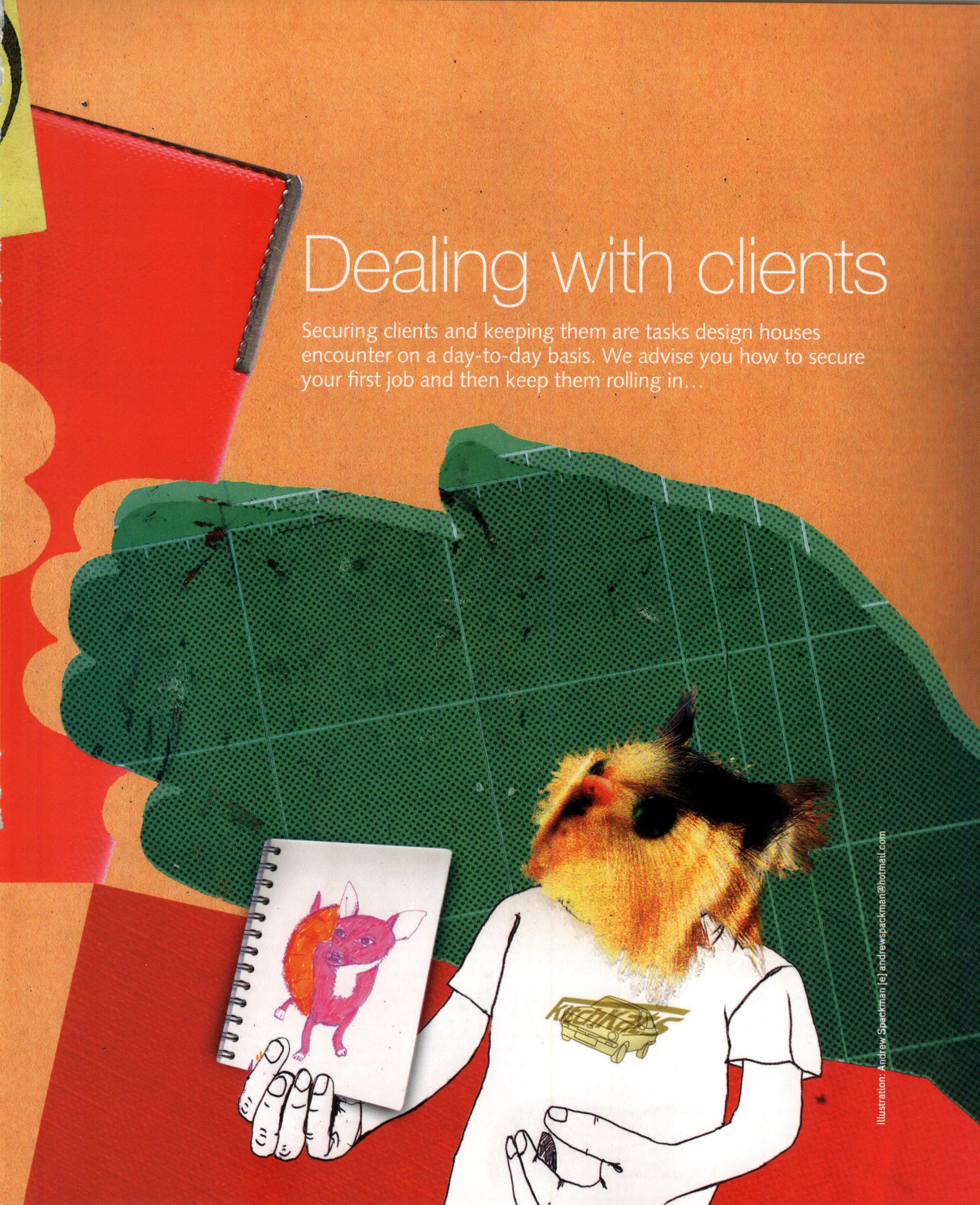


Illustration: Andrew Spackman [e] andrewspackman@hotmail.com

Designers are rarely celebrated for their flowing patter, persuasive wit and engaging charisma. We're more of a bunch that like to hide in holes, get a bit drunk, and wait for the Next Big Idea. Our other halves are lucky if they get more than three or four words out of us during a phone call, and our buddies know to cut out the small chat. To boot, we're chaotic, sporadic and, well... creative, yah know. Which makes you wonder how any design business gets off the ground at all.

"If you're going to be a great designer, you need to be a great communicator"

Well there's another angle to this. Fundamentally, design is about communication. If you're going to be a great designer, you need to be a great communicator: you need to understand how you can talk to people, engage people and persuade people through your work. That's how you make yourself worth money — yes, real money — to other businesses. It's not a talkie-talkie chinwag angle, it's much more immediate and subliminal.

You can use these same skills by showing your work and talking with clients about it, to sell yourself on territory you know backwards. Back it up with passion for what you do, a solid commercial approach and lots of great ideas, and you're away.

Okay, this new-agey talk is all very well, but when we get down to the nitty gritty of real work, you've still got to talk to people, deal with clients, and deal with them well. Ninety per cent of the time, your first contact with a new client — or employer, if you're looking for a full time job — will be via email or over the phone. Your first job is to get yourself from there into their office for presentation.

Then you have to present your ideas, often in competition with other designers. Once you've won the business, you need to manage the project, keep it running on time and make sure you get paid for it. After that, it'd be good if you can build the relationship and undertake some more projects with the same client, or get a few good referrals. After all, that's where all the best business comes from. But how on earth do you handle all this?

It's a daunting task if you're new to it, and it doesn't get any less daunting when you've been at it for a few years. The only difference is that hopefully you're talking to bigger, more important people.

What do you want?

It's tempting in the beginning to flap about wondering what clients want, which is all very good — Customer-Comes-First, la-di-da. But a better place to begin is probably with what *you* want. After all, a good percentage of clients have no idea what they want from a designer (except the usual better, cheaper, quicker) until they get themselves a good agency and see what it

Writing proposals

Preparing pitches is tricky, but it's an important part of the process...

This is especially true where you're pitching for a large scale campaign, or an area of design such as web design, which clients still find confusing. So where do you begin?

Here's one approach: take four blank pages. On the first page, write down the key points about your approach to design, your background, and what makes you so good.

On the second and third pages, write down four or five headers, each being one of the main objectives the client has for their project, and under each header write down what they need to do to make this happen. For example, if they want to sell more products on their website, maybe they need to make it easier to use. Explain how, making it informative and educational. The more your clients learn from you, the more they will trust you.

On your final page, draw a timeline from now until the date the project needs to be completed, and then a month beyond. Write on this timeline every job that needs to be done to get the project completed, by whom, and roughly how long it should take. This will give your client confidence that you've thought about the details, know how to take the lead on the project, and complete it to a high standard.

Now all you need to do is join up the sentences, add a logo, staple your quote to the back, and send it through. Oh, and always put the client's name in big letters on a cover sheet. They really like that.

does to their sales figures. Even then it can be tricky to convince some directors that their budding 16-year-old nephew with a spanking new iMac really shouldn't be doing their new logo.

So a better angle all in all is to start with yourself. What kind of design agency, or designer, do you want to be? How do you want clients to see you? What points do you want them to mull over when they're deciding whether to take you on? Creative flair, insight, imagination? Very good, here's a few more attributes to consider:

- Fast
- Reliable
- Friendly
- Helpful

We're sorry, we know it's all very recruitment village, but try to think of it another way. Try to be the client for a moment. Everyone's working hell for leather, like they always do, and suddenly the boss turns up and demands they get a new product on the shelves before Christmas, and that's on top of all the other stuff. More than anything else, the team wants a designer who can help them still leave the office at 6pm, and get a pay rise in the new year.

Preparing for pitches

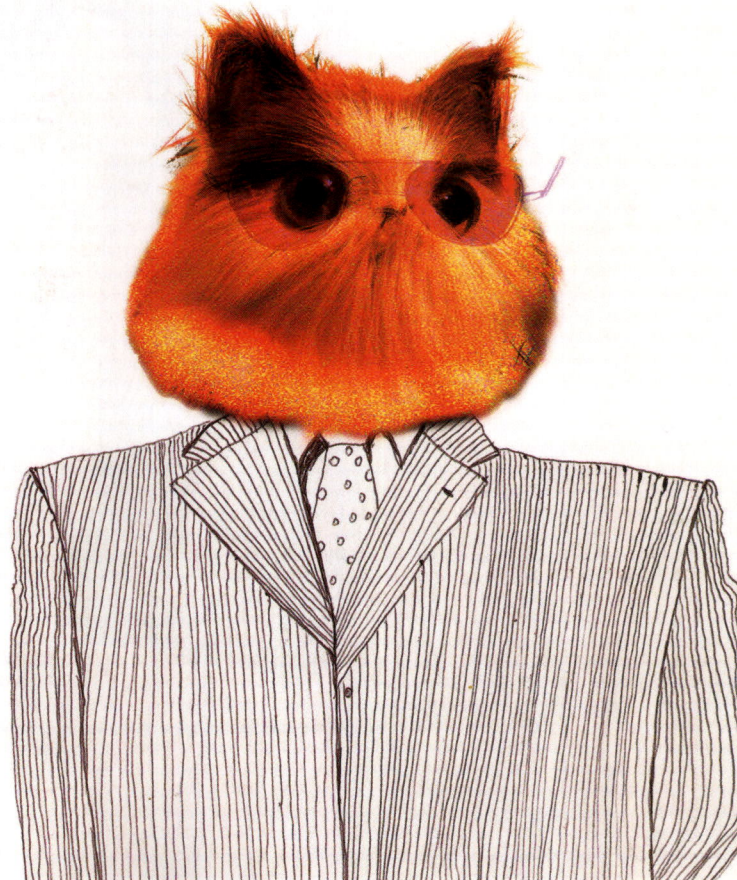
So how do you take all this to a pitch, and win the job? This really is one of the most difficult things any designer has to do.

Your first trick is to try and get an informal meeting with a least someone on the team 'to discuss the job' before the actual pitch. A phenomenal proportion of agencies don't bother with this, some handling it on the phone, and some only by email. It's a totally wasted opportunity — the meeting works for you in four ways:

1. You get to look really keen.
2. The team feels more comfortable with you, because they've met you in a more relaxed situation.
3. You feel more comfortable with them, for the same reason.
4. Most importantly, you know way more about what the client wants than anyone else. You can find out if they want a full-blown proposal, technical detail, examples of work, or just ideas. You can also get an idea of how much they want to spend.

With all this under your arm, your second trick is to prepare some strong material for the presentation itself — and possibly send some of it ahead to make sure everyone's had a chance to give it a good look through. This is what you'll need to prepare:

1. A written proposal.
2. What you're actually going to say.
3. Three ideas the client didn't think of.
4. Possibly a sample design or two (nicely mounted, no dog-ears).
5. Your portfolio.
6. Some testimonials from clients — these work wonders.
7. A list of questions.
8. A list of answers for their likely questions, including costs.



Many designer's find the proposal the hardest bit. How long? What to say? Will they read it? It all depends on you, the client, and the project. Safe to say, don't write a ten-page proposal for a £500 job — but for a £10,000 project, you might want to. If you get stuck, take a look at the 'Writing proposals' box on the previous page. Whatever you do, don't read out your proposal at the pitch. This is a complete disaster zone. If you feel uncomfortable presenting, you can quickly throw questions back to your potential clients for discussion — "What do you think about doing it this way...?", or "How do you feel about doing an email newsletter?", and so on. You can be sure they'll have a lot to say.

At the end of the meeting, be sure to get a date by which they'll come back to you. Drop the client an email the next day to say, "Thanks for inviting me to pitch, and I look forward to hearing." And if they haven't phoned the day after you were expecting to hear, call them to see if they've decided.

If you get the job...

Getting new clients is extremely hard work. Hanging on to them, if you're good, is much easier. If you want to get richer, you really need to focus on building a small number of accounts to give you regular, bread-and-butter work. The way to do this is keep on making their managers and directors happy, and coming up with new ideas for them to spend more money with you.

You'll find you need to speak to some clients every day. Even if they don't spend as much as another client, if that's the way they work, then you go with it and look at ways to start building this into your fees.

You'll find other clients are totally chaotic: everything's always late, they never know quite what's happening where and when, and you always end up doing the job between 6pm and midnight. Again, that's the life: if you can't organise them, charge a little extra.

And if things are going well, you'll have one or two clients that pay well, have regular work, and keep everything efficient and organised. These are your diamonds: send them the best bottle of wine at Christmas, and find a good excuse to drop them a line if things go quiet for a week or two.

Back to the beginning then: dealing with clients can be nerve-wracking, difficult, and sometimes unpleasant. But if you focus on what you're good at, and remember that most clients just want a pay rise, a promotion, or to get home on time, then they'll soon come to depend on you and love you for it. ca-p

Illustration: Studio Output [w] www.studio-output.com

Essential web resources

Some links to make dealing with clients an easier task...

Very long web address, yet good article about handling disagreements with clients:
[w] www.7nights.com/asterisk/archive/2004/09/creative-conflict-clients.php

A great article on the demerits of free pitching at the Australian Graphic Design Association:
[w] www.agda.asn.au/dm/Free_Pitching.pdf

Take a look at what happened over Freedom Tower, to be built on Ground Zero:
[w] www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/sacred/

Advice from Andrew Neitlich at Sitepoint – very American, very hype, but there's some good business stuff in there:
[w] www.sitepoint.com/article/design-firms-think-big

Tips for freelancers at Channel 4:
[w] www.ideasfactory.com/careers/features/car_feature12.htm

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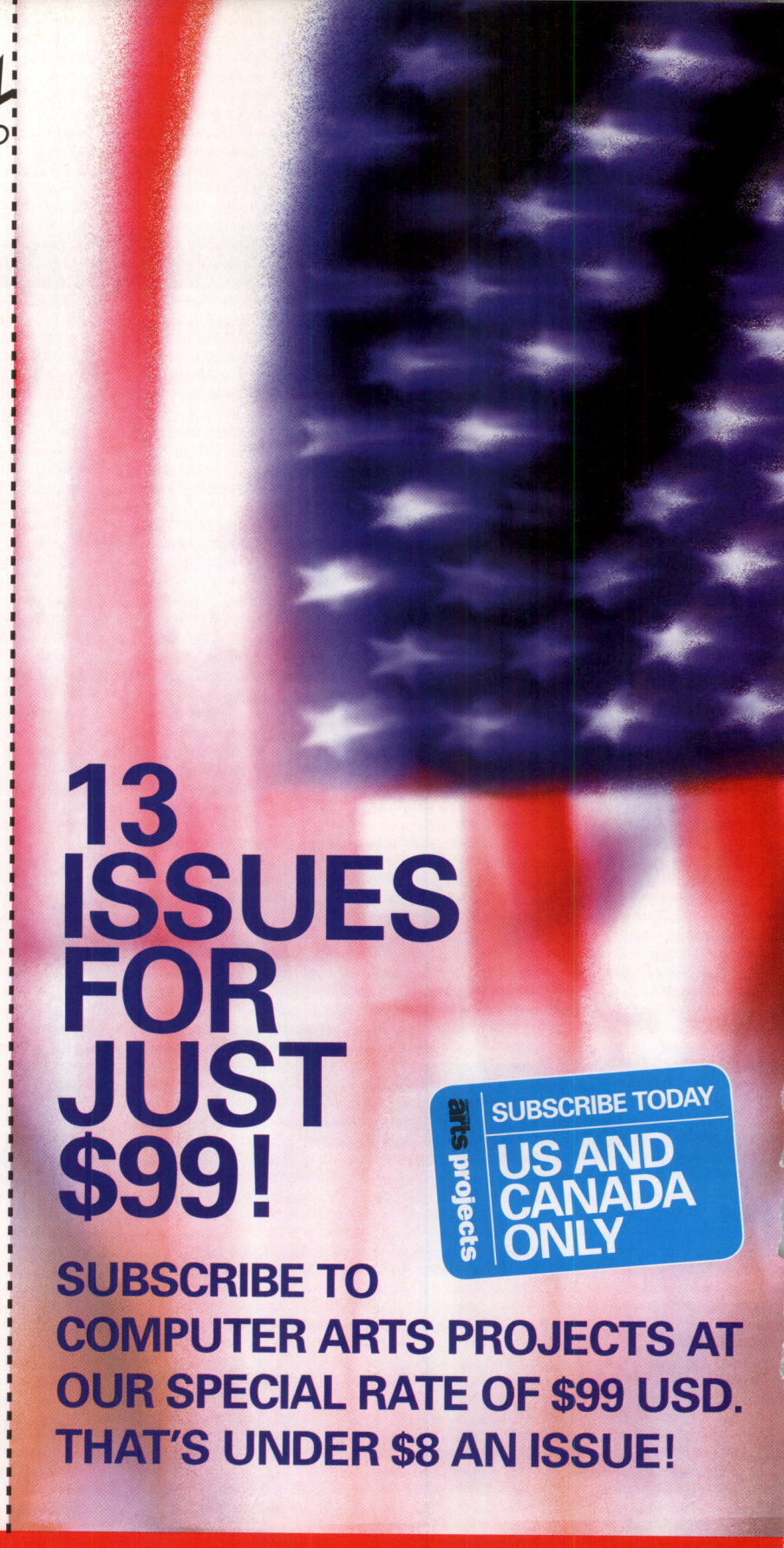

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Following an editorial brief

Discover the secrets of successfully fulfilling a client brief...

Working in the field of editorial illustration can be a creatively demanding job, especially with an art director barking down the phone that your solution needs to be original, witty, creative and with him the day before yesterday. It's at times like these that it can be tempting to jump straight on the Mac, boot up *Photoshop* and press the little button that says Create. Whaddaya mean there isn't one?!

First and foremost, good illustration is about ideas and the best tool for the job? Yep you guessed it. The humble pencil. *Photoshop* won't think for you, it won't help you solve a bitch of a brief at 4:00 in the morning and, contrary to the opinion of most graduates, it will not get you your first commission or pay off your student loan.

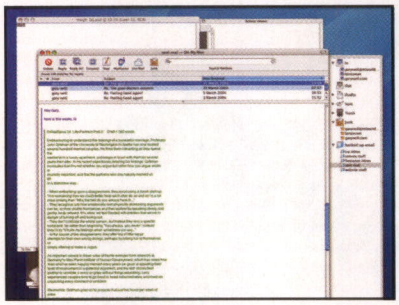
We're going to be following illustrator Gary Neill as he tussles with yet another two-day editorial brief, this time for an article about arguments between couples. The starting point as always is a nice mug of tea, some good music and a trusty pencil.

Expertise provided by Gary Neill, a freelance illustrator whose clients include *The Guardian*, *Time Out*, BBC, *The Economist* and *The Big Issue*. You can contact Gary at **[e]** gary@garyneill.com or visit **[w]** www.garyneill.com.

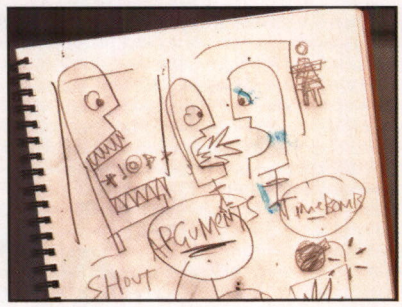
All the components needed to complete this tutorial can be found on this month's cover CD in the Software\Tutorials\Tutorial files\Tutorial files\All\Brief folder.

Part 1: Ideas and inspiration

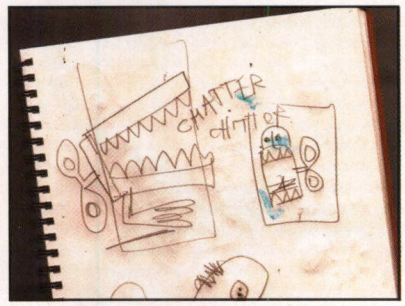
Read the brief and come up with as many ideas as possible...



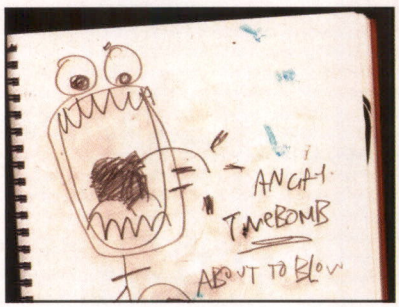
1 Once you've received a brief, allow yourself the time and opportunity to read it a couple of times, perhaps highlighting areas in the text that spark off initial visual metaphors or images in your mind. Don't jump straight in and think you know what image you're going to create because that's likely to be the most obvious idea or solution.



2 Sit down with a sketch book and a pencil and doodle any visual metaphors, signs, symbols, expressions, images that you can think of that are associated with the subject. Allow your mind to wander and try not to be precious about the drawings – just get them out of your head and on paper, where you can work on them.

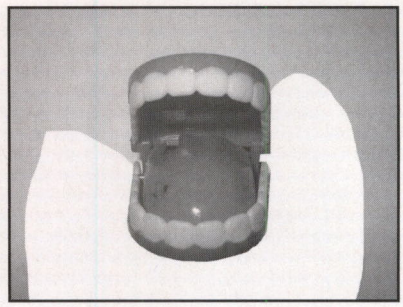


3 The brief is essentially about arguments and the damage they do to relationships. The majority of the doodles seem to be focusing on mouths and what they look like, say and do. I explore the idea that mouths can be wound up, like little toys, and then just run and run until they run out of energy just like in arguments.

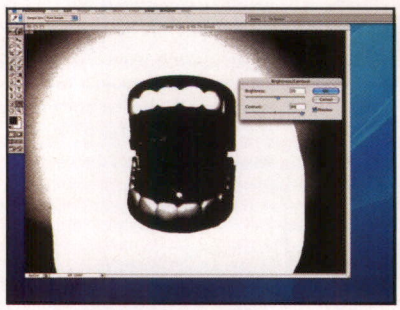


4 This doodle of a timebomb connects an explosive element with the back of an open, shouting mouth. It's only a quick doodle, but it could be worth exploring a bit further.

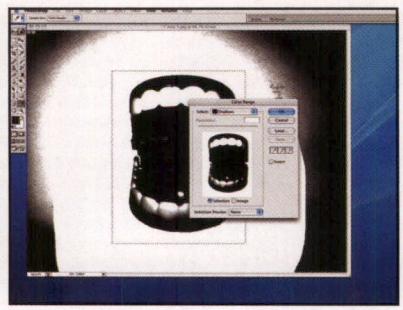
5 After a trip to a joke shop, a toy mouth has been sourced and crudely photographed with a digital camera in an effort to work up a quick rough visual. Time is of the essence here because if this idea doesn't check out visually then it's literally back to the drawing board.



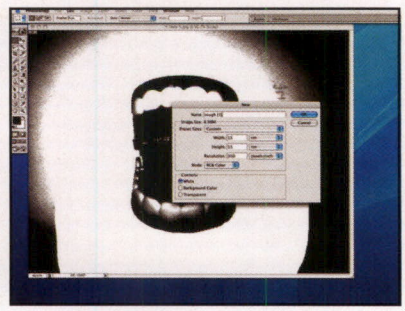
6 After converting the RGB image to greyscale, I carefully lasso around the bottom of the mouth to give a clean line at the base. I try to do this quickly but carefully because I don't want to have to go back and do it again later if the rough is approved.



7 Next, I go to Image>Adjustments>Brightness & Contrast and play around with boosting the contrast to achieve a silhouetted mouth shape and profile. Once I'm happy with the image, I click OK.



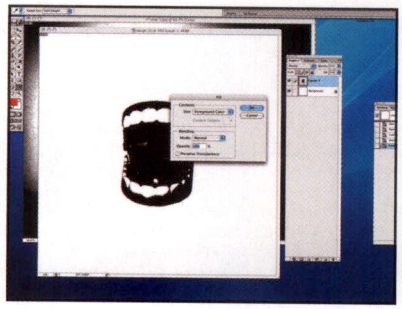
8 After drawing a rectangular lasso around the mouth area, I go to Select>Colour Range and select some shadows that I made earlier by adjusting the brightness and contrast.



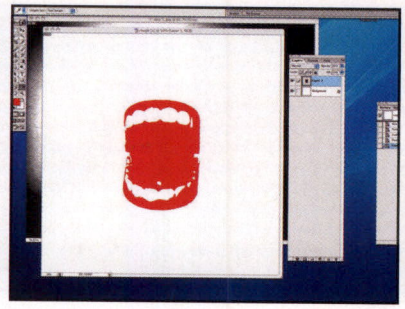
9 The selected shadows are now copied to the pasteboard. A new document is made at 300dpi and RGB. This is where the rough visual will be created.

Part 2: Working up a quick rough

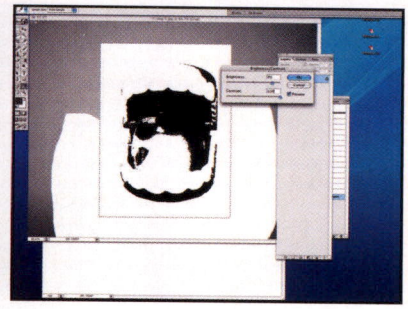
Work begins on a digital rough to show to the client...



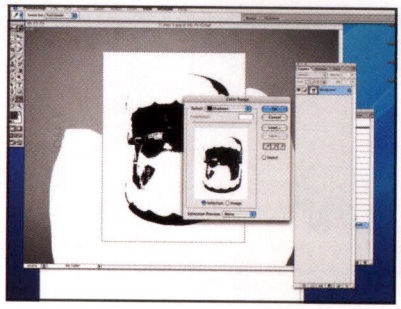
1 Once the new document is open, the mouth is pasted into it. This shows up as Layer 1 in the Layers menu. Next, I hold down the Ctrl/Cmnd key and click on Layer 1 in the Layers menu, quickly lassoing the selected area. Then I go to Edit>Fill to fill in the selected area.



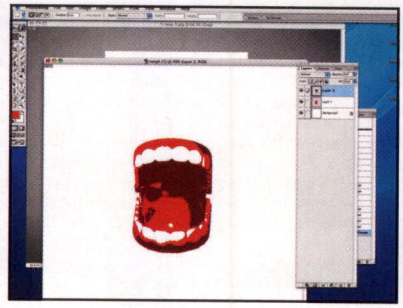
2 This layer consists only of the shadows that were initially selected and have now been coloured red. Everything that appears white is in fact transparent. This means transparent layers can be placed on top of and behind this layer.



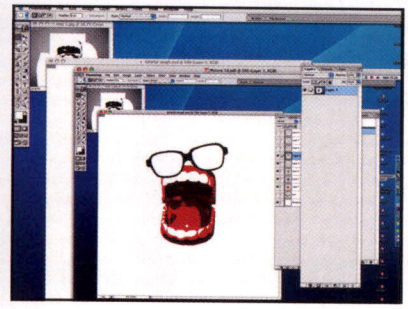
3 Now it's back to the original digital photograph of the mouth and using the History menu to go back to the point before the Brightness and Contrast had first been applied. I then re-adjust the brightness and contrast to further bleach out the image, but this time leaving much harsher shadows.



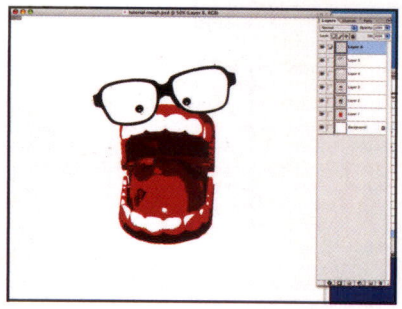
4 Repeating the process shown earlier, the shadows are selected and then copied and pasted on the rough visual document that was created earlier.



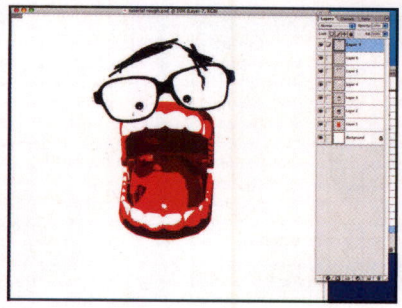
5 This new layer is placed over the original red mouth and the Opacity is dropped to 40 per cent giving depth and dimension to what was previously a flat graphic mouth. At this stage, the rough is going in the right direction and it's worth giving it another hour or two of work.



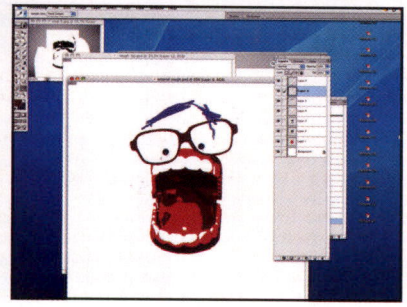
6 Another set of shadows is added to the mouth to give further depth. This same process of adjusting the brightness and contrast and then selecting shadows is then applied to a scanned pair of spectacles. These spectacles, along with odd bits of leftover texture, are then copied quickly onto the composition.



7 Next, some hole-punched circular bits of paper are scanned in, adjusted, and then copied and pasted onto the composition as pupils. The shapes are scanned in to avoid the crisp linear quality that using the Circle or Rectangle tool gives. The Eraser tool is used to pick out highlights in the eyes.



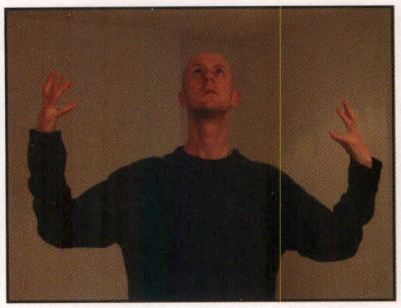
8 Some hair (quickly drawn with a chunky pencil) is added into the rough composition to start to define the character of the face. There's now a nice contrast between the drawn, iconic and photographic elements.



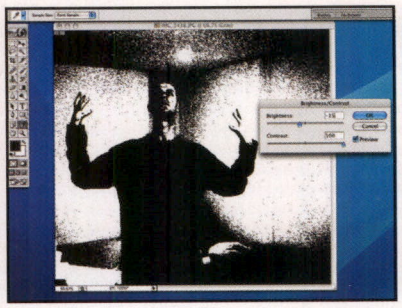
9 Repeating the technique shown in Step 1 above, I quickly change the colouring of the recently introduced elements of glasses, hair, and pupils. The illo is still a rough at this stage, so I don't dwell on this stage for too long.

Part 3: Adding a body

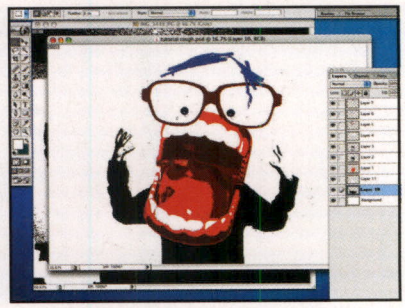
Body shots are taken to add a human element to the illustration...



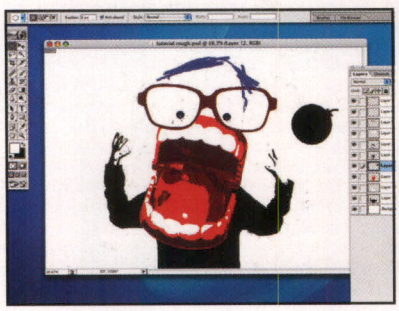
1 The character needs a suggestive body to work in conjunction with the expressive head. I balance a digital camera on a shelf and after various attempts manage to photograph myself in a suitably frustrated pose.



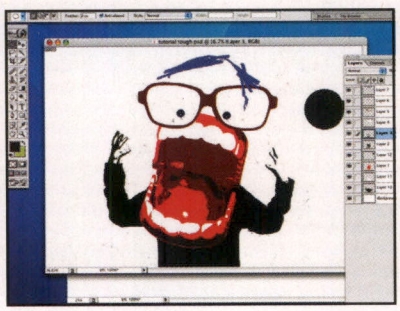
2 Just as in previous stages, the Brightness and Contrast tool is used crudely to define a flat, graphic, silhouetted shape of my figure. The Eraser tool is then used to tidy up unwanted bits before selecting the shadows and then copying the selected area onto the rough visualisation.



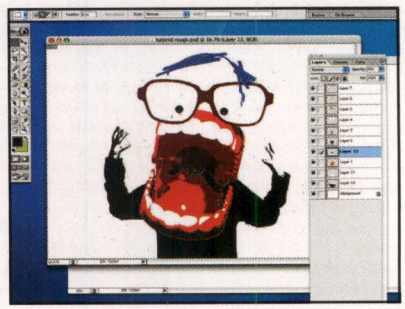
3 This layer is quickly pasted into the composition and sent to the back of the other layers. The image is showing potential because the figure adds more expression to the overall composition yet doesn't distract the viewer from the main focal point – the mouth.



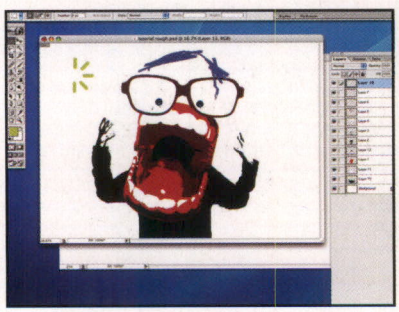
4 A new layer is created and the Circle and Rectangle tools are used to draw a very simple iconic bomb. This needs to be on a separate layer so that it can be dragged over onto the mouth area to form the back of the throat as in the rough idea scribbled at the start.



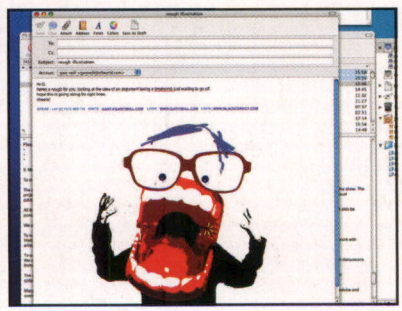
5 Having dragged the bomb over the mouth, it becomes apparent that the area at the back of the throat is too small to fit the bomb into. However, rather than reducing the size of the bomb, the Lasso tool is used to move down the bit of Layer 3 that defines the top of the tongue.



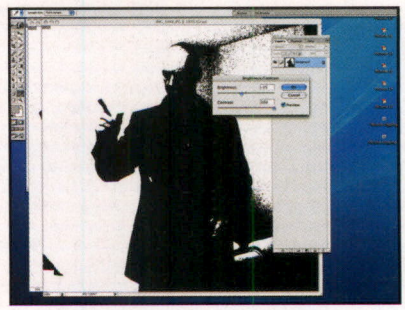
6 The Opacity of the bomb layer is adjusted so that the bomb can be positioned inside the mouth. The area of Layer 3 is now lassoed. I then go to Select>Inverse to lasso the negative area of Layer 3. The Eraser tool can then be used to remove any of the bomb that occurs in this selected area.



7 Adjusting the Opacity of the bomb back up to 100 per cent gives the impression that the bomb is disappearing behind the tongue, but it is also suggestive of being the throat. A bright colour is then selected and the paintbrush is used to quickly draw a spark for the bomb.



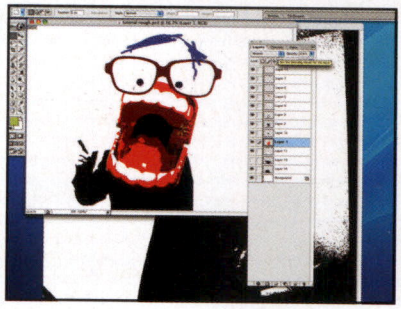
8 With the spark of the bomb in place, the rough image is ready to show to the client. The image is flattened and a 100dpi version is emailed to the client for feedback.



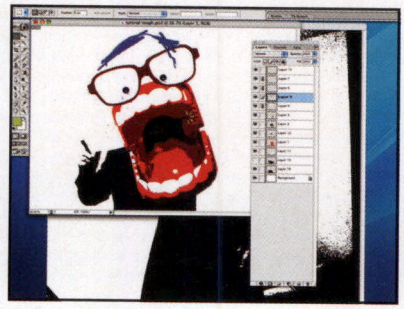
9 After a trip to the local cafe with the rough, the feedback is positive. However, the client feels that the character in the illustration needs to be a bit more confrontational. I set up the digital camera and record a range of confrontational poses, which are then adjusted to make a graphic figure.

Part 4: Finalising the image

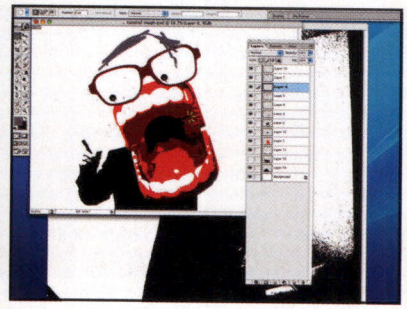
Changes are implemented according to the client feedback...



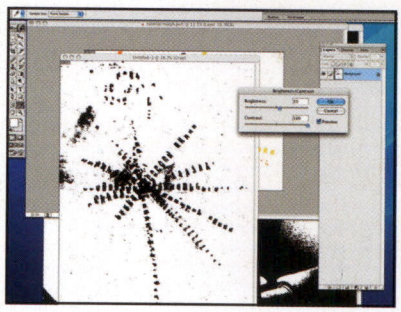
1 This new confrontational figure is quickly pasted onto the rough illustration. The feedback from the client was constructive and this new figure has enhanced the idea behind the illustration. Sometimes you can be too close to your own work, and this is where a good relationship with a good art director can be invalidable.



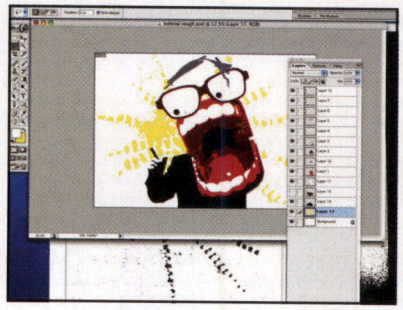
2 To enhance the aggressive nature of the character, the mouth and features of the character are rotated. The eyes are also adjusted so that the character looks like he's arguing with someone 'off screen'.



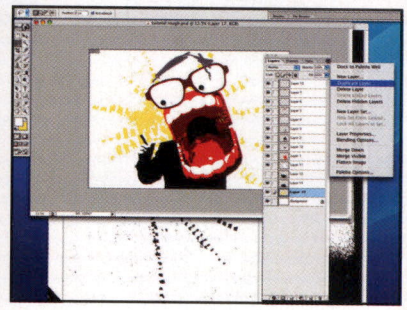
3 The colours of the hair and eyes are fighting for the viewer's attention with the colour of the mouth. To rectify this, the colour of the hair is adjusted and the tones of the eyes are changed to black to encourage the viewer to focus its attention on the mouth.



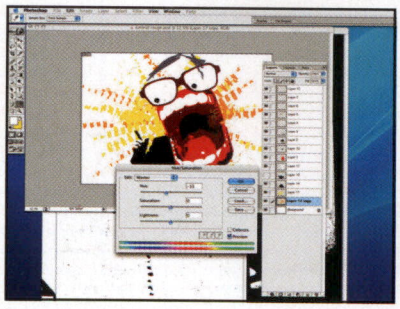
4 Attention is now turned to the background, which should be loose and explosive yet mustn't fight too much with the character. Letraset is used to make an explosion of letters almost like expletives muttered in an argument. These are then scanned and adjusted as before.



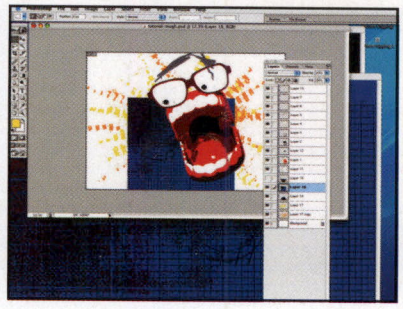
5 This explosion of letters is copied and pasted to the rear of the composition. Ctrl/Cmnd>T is used to adjust the scale and angle of the explosion so that it's cropped by the frame. I choose a light yellow and fill the layer with this colour.



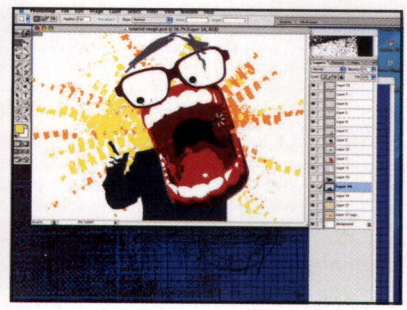
6 The explosion now needs to be a bit busier. So, rather than copying and pasting the existing layer, the button in the top right of the layer menu is clicked and I scroll down to duplicate the selected layer.



7 Using Ctrl/Cmnd>T, the new layer is rotated and placed at the rear of all other layers in the compositon. Ctrl/Cmnd>U is clicked to adjust the Hue/Saturation to a level that I'm happy with.



8 The black of the body seems to be fighting for the viewer's attention with the black of the timebomb. To rectify this, a texture from a previous commission is cut and pasted. I then select the negative space around the character and use this as a mask to erase the texture outside the figure.



9 Finally, I adjust the colour of the spark to white to help focus the viewer's attention on the key area. Happy that the image communicates a clear message but in a creative, exciting way, the image is saved and flattened before emailing the final 300dpi artwork to the client. ca-p

Tim Marrs

"That's the future of illustration, finding interesting side projects and continually adding new elements." Tim Marrs keeps it fresh.

Having just completed work on a set of ads for Nike's Air Jordan brand, illustrator Tim Marrs is clearly winning favour with the right people. And it's easy to see why. His carefully layered work is rich with visual puns and textual references that hint at a long-running love affair with US culture. This grasp of American iconography makes Tim a perfect match for brands such as Mook, Nike and even the dust jackets of the legendary author Elmore Leonard.

Tim's fascination with the US dates back to his formative years: "When I was a teenager, growing up in the East Midlands, I always listened to a lot of bad American rock music and fantasised about LA. It seemed a very exciting place." This excitement has translated into a style of illustration which has the sensibilities of British design and the flair of the American visual tradition.

But the love flows in both directions. "I've had a wonderful time working for some of my US clients," says Tim. "They seem to have more respect for illustration. In the UK, I think it's sometimes seen as a bit of a page filler." Tim's feeling is that the UK, as is often the case, undervalues its assets.

"I also read a lot of American crime fiction," he says. The transatlantic connection has another pay-off, giving Tim the chance to work on jobs he's naturally in tune with. "I've just done a few covers for some Elmore Leonard books. That's kind of a dream job for me." The works are currently in the hands of the author himself, a thought which clearly gives Tim a lot of pleasure.

Getting started

"I came out of college knowing something had to change; my style was still quite raw," explains Tim. When he completed his MA at Central Saint Martins, he was faced with the less-than-enticing prospect of going freelance. His first steps were taken with something approaching trepidation: "For me it was quite difficult initially, even while I was doing my MA I was working in an art shop, so I'd always been earning." Central London can be unforgiving for the financially challenged. The trick, says Tim, is to stay focused: "You have to be self-motivated, especially when you're not getting work." Not as easy as it sounds: "I would design little personalised promotional jobs – just choosing 10 or 15 companies I thought would like my work and producing something tailor-made for them." Tim's approach paid off.

Getting those first clients can be difficult, particularly as most design courses do little or nothing to prepare you. Tim suggests editorial work as the best place to start: "You have to remember that it's the art editor's job to keep a lookout for new illustrators, so don't be put off." Look at the positive angles: "I'm always looking to change and update my portfolio, so taking it around places was a good way to get some constructive advice."

A visual dilemma

"When I came out of the MA," begins Tim, "there was lots of fashion and vector stuff around. I really hated that. I prefer to keep things looking hand-made." Tim's work is built up in layers, often incorporating textual references to create visual puns. The style is engagingly honest.

Having struggled with paint during his BA, he was determined to find a working style that played to his strengths. "I had all these different elements – sketchbooks, paint, found textures – and it was a struggle to find a way to put these all together." The solution came courtesy of Adobe Systems.

"I use *Photoshop* in a very basic way," says Tim. "There's no filters or anything, it's like working on an endless screen print." *Photoshop* enabled him to integrate the elements of his style perfectly: "You could say the computer helped me solve my visual dilemma."

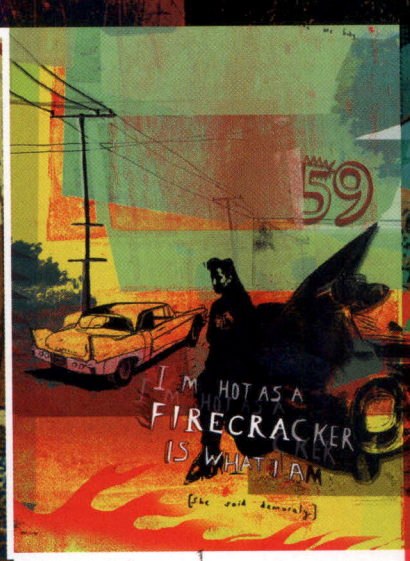
Collective ambitions

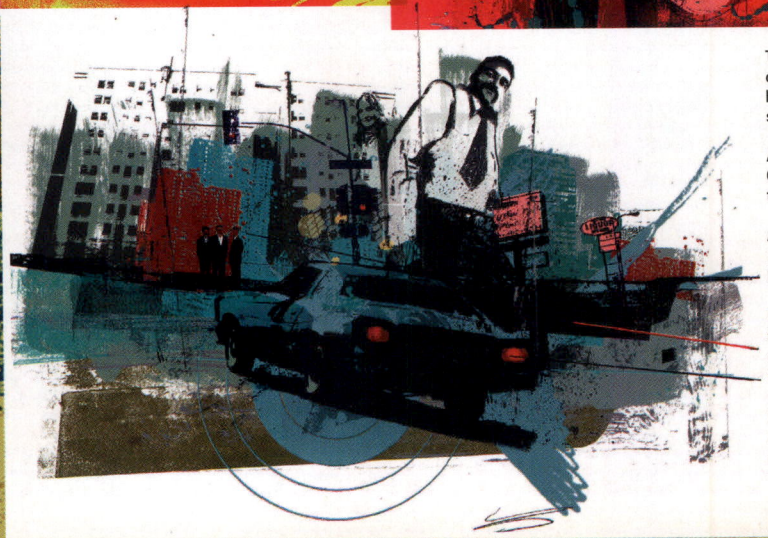
"Digital prints look lovely, but making something from scratch has its own appeal," says Tim. Having worked for so long on the computer, Tim is keen to get his hands dirty again: "I want to start getting back into making physical art."

This ambition is fuelling Tim's work with the 'Black Convoy' collective, a group of illustrators and designers, including the likes of Richard May and the Neasden Control Centre, bent on creating work with broader horizons.

"It's a chance to get away from everyday stuff and do something different," is Tim's enthusiastic response about the possibilities, particularly of working with 'The Apartment'. "They have a permanent exhibition space in New York and we're planning to work the interior over. We're going to do a 'black convoy' on it." Keep on truckin'! ca▸p

To see more of Tim Marrs' illustration work visit **[w]** www.timmarrs.co.uk. You can contact him on **[e]** tim.marrs@virgin.net or **[t]** +44 (0)771 4062447. Also see **[w]** www.blackconvoy.com.





Top: Commissioned by the Italian magazine *urban*, this project gave Tim a chance to show off his very personal style. "I prefer to keep things looking hand-made," he says, after making disparaging remarks about overly smooth vector art.

Above-left: Going freelance is often a big step to take. When he left Central Saint Martins, MA in hand, Tim set about producing a series of tailored promotional pieces. This is one of those, based on US car culture.

Above-right: Keeping the rock theme going, Tim produced this piece for *Uncut* magazine to accompany an article about the early years of rock legend Kurt Cobain.

Left: Exciting news for any fan of American crime fiction, Tim has recently finished a series of Elmore Leonard book covers for Orion books. Tim describes these pieces as, "Different in style to things I've done before, they kind of explode from the space rather than being confined by it."

Background image: These inlays produced for US rock act Something Corporate are another example of Tim's happy working relationship with the US. "I've had a wonderful time working for some of my US clients. They seem to have more respect for illustration," he says.

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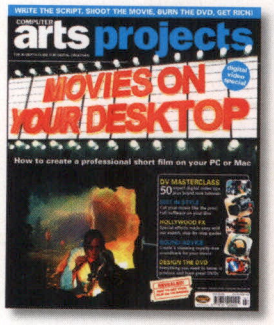

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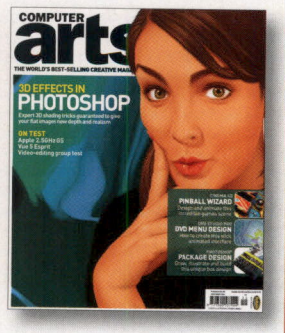

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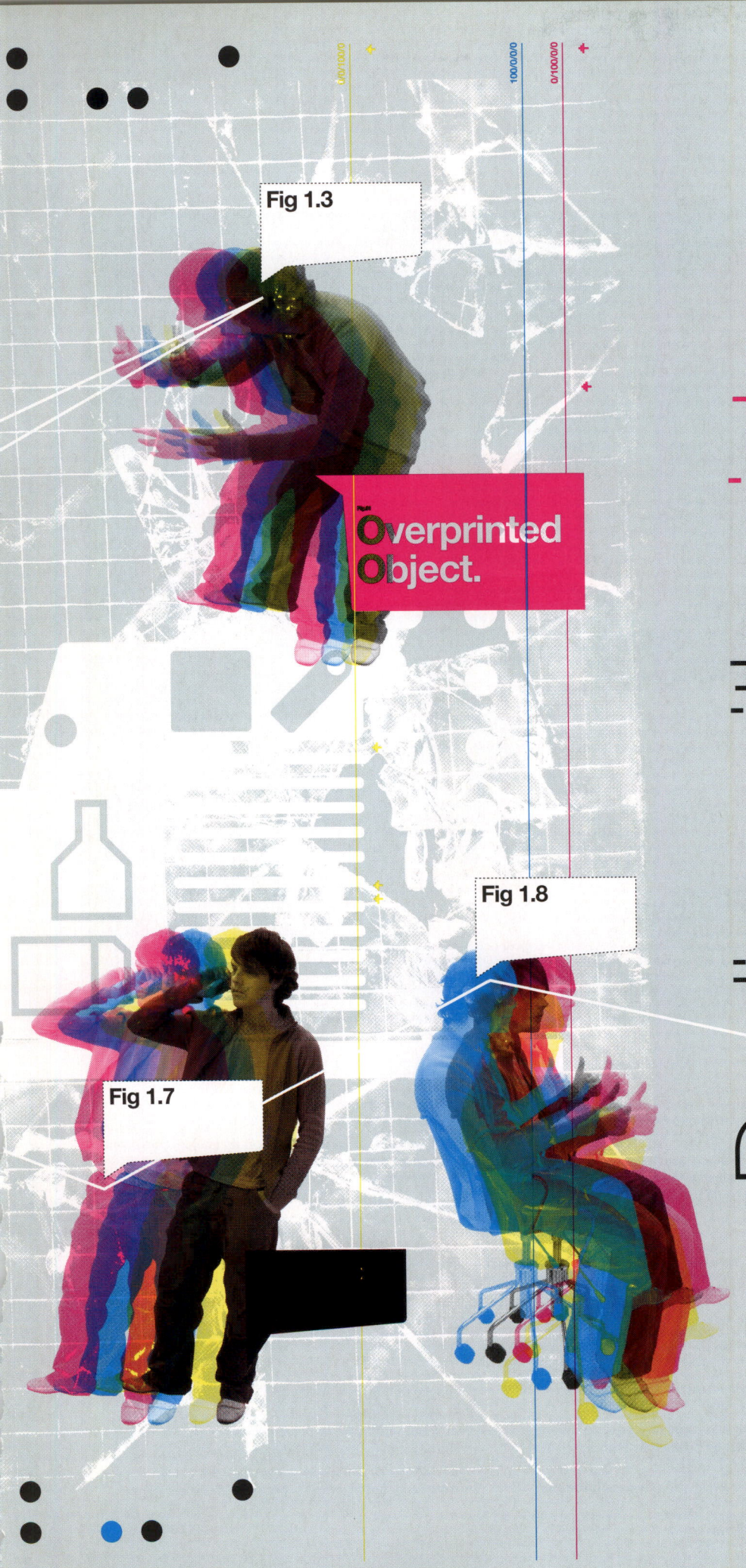
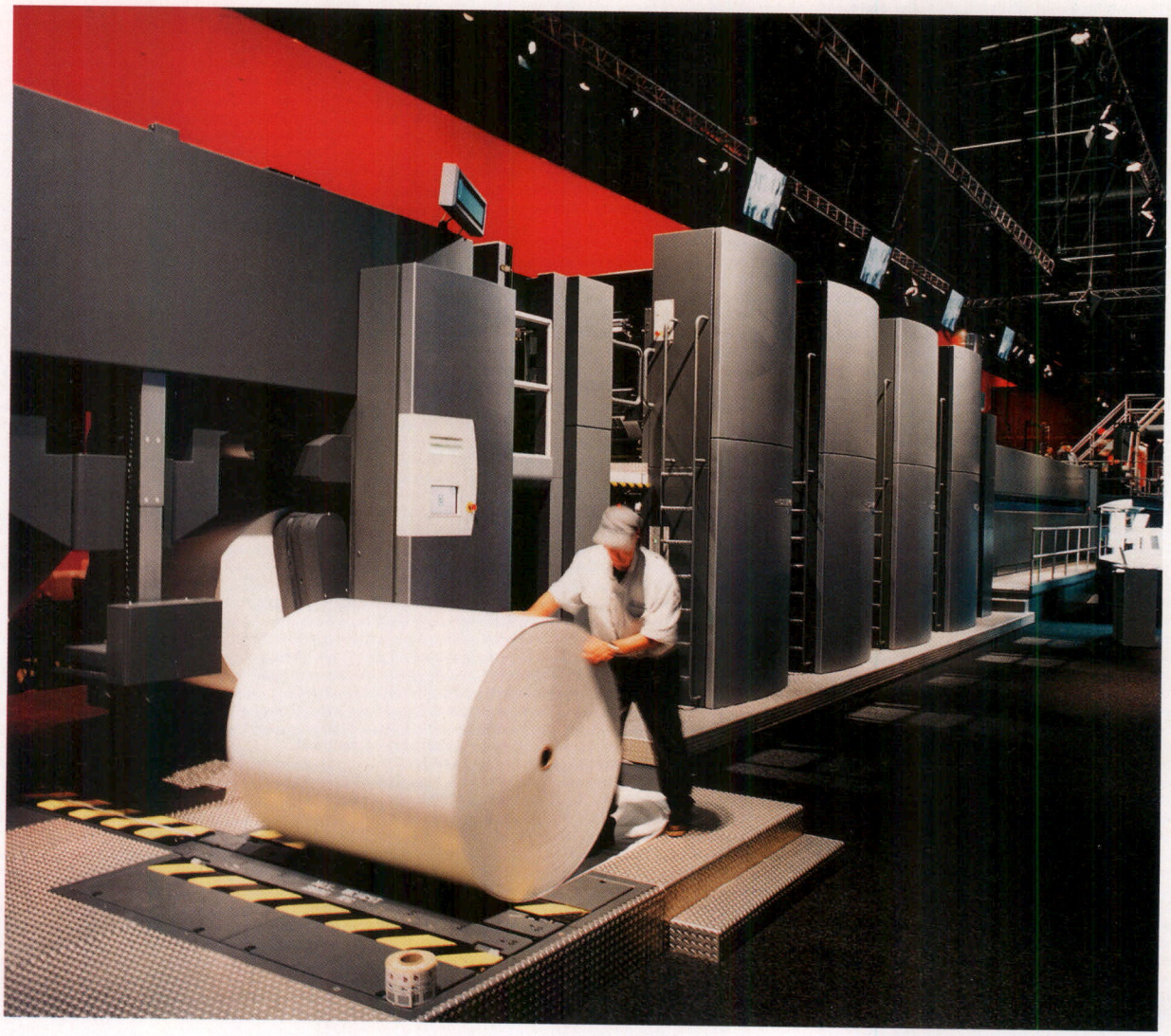
Dealing with printers

Knowing how to approach a printer and successfully meeting their expectations will ensure you get top-quality print at low prices...

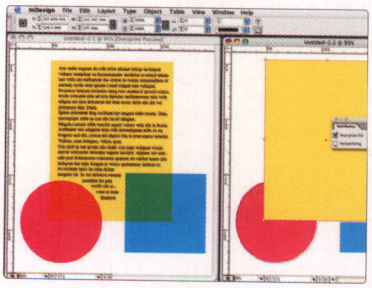
The printing industry has undergone a transformation in recent years, with the scalpel-wielding darkroom boys being largely replaced by digital workflows. This means designers have a considerable measure of control over how print jobs are handled right up to the point of output.

However, it also means there is less margin for error. Nor should you forget that there is more to dealing with a printer than serving up data files: printing remains a physical activity involving papers, inks, staff and machinery. Over the following pages we take you through this printing process. ›





Reel-fed 'web' presses such as this Heidelberg Sunday 4000 offer high-speed, long-run output for tens of thousands of copies.



Activating *InDesign*'s Overprint Fill option in the Attributes palette forces an object to overprint (not knock out) whatever is underneath.

Choosing a printer

There are three general types of printing operation. The most visible is the high-street or city-centre print shop. The digitisation of pre-press and short-run printing has meant that these businesses have transformed over the past five years from office document copy shops to versatile, high-quality colour houses. They are appropriate for print runs of up to a few thousand using standard A-size papers in a limited range of stock qualities, and are the best choice for short runs of wide-format poster output.

Less visible but better equipped for longer and more customised jobs, established printing houses can be found hidden in industrial estates all over the country. These operations offer a greater variety of presses and expert features such as fluorescent spot inks, varnishing, foil blocking and die-cutting. Their systems will be digital but the presses are offset litho, supporting custom trim sizes, full bleed layouts and a greater range of paper stock.

The third type is the major printing plant which runs many different presses under one roof, from two-colour sheet-fed machines for business stationery all the way up to reel-fed 'web' offset installations for long-run newspaper, catalogue or magazine work. Although these huge factory-style sites might seem forbidding to a lone designer or small studio just starting out, printers are always looking to fill vacant capacity. Often they are prepared to run small, quick jobs simply to ensure their expensive presses (and their expensive press minders) are not

> "Make a shortlist of three printers and ask them all to offer a price quotation for your job"

Jobs of several thousand copies may be produced using a sheet-fed offset litho press such as this Heidelberg PrintMaster PM74-4.

sitting round doing nothing during the lull between running big jobs for their main customers.

Making the approach

The best way to choose a printer is to find some examples of print work roughly similar to the kind of job you have in mind, then try to find out who produced it. Ask colleagues and college contacts for recommendations. Bear in mind that not all printers can offer what you want. For example, medium and large press sites probably won't be able to handle short-run poster work cost-effectively, while small printers are unlikely to be able to produce paperback books.

Make a shortlist of three printers and ask them all to offer a price quotation for your job. But first, ask for some print samples: serious printers are always happy to provide these. Ask them what kind of jobs they normally run and consider asking for customer references. Ask for a 'mechanical data' sheet, which summarises the type of presses they have, the print runs they support, the papers they can use, and lots of technical information on trim sizes, ink colours, bleed measurements and so on. If you can quote some of this technical data and jargon back when asking for a price quotation, the printer will assume you are a hardened professional who won't give them the runaround, and therefore offer you a lower quote.

> "Ask for some print samples: serious printers are always happy to provide these"

The quotation should state the precise print run, along with the price of run-ons (extra copies) if you decide to increase the number before ordering. It should state

Submitting files

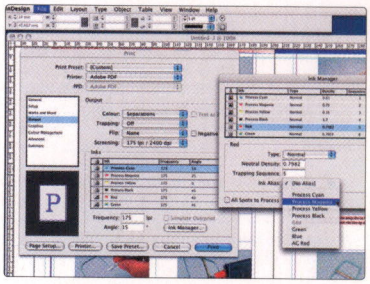
Before sending

- Mechanical data: ask the printer for its bleed, maximum ink coverage and halftone screen measurements.
- File format: ask the printer which layout, image and graphic file formats it can accept.
- PDF: if supplying documents in PDF format, ask the printer for precise PDF creation settings.
- Delivery: how does the printer want you to submit files (CD, email, FTP, etc).
- Advance warning: allow your printer time to order special papers and inks if you want non-standard trim sizes and spot colours.

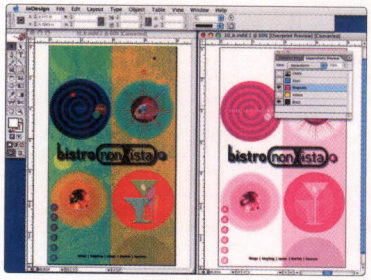
On the day

- Image resolution: do not enlarge bitmap images so that effective resolution falls below 2 x halftone screen of output.
- Transparency: flatten all transparency effects unless the printer gives you instructions to the contrary.
- Spots: check for unintentional spot colours (or unintentional process colours) on your files.
- File naming: use consistent, logical and decipherable naming conventions for all files and folders.
- Complete package: ensure all loose pictures and fonts are included with the job, or embed them into the PDF.
- Instructions: supply full output and delivery instructions with the job, plus contact information.
- Page proofs: supply simple hardcopy printouts with your files.
- Preflight: if you have a preflighting feature or program, use it!

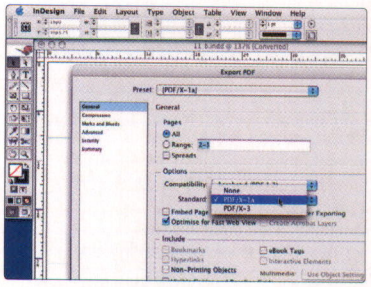
Very short-run, large-format work will probably be output on a wide-carriage inkjet such as Epson's Stylus Pro series.



InDesign's Ink Manager enables you to convert spot colours to CMYK or remap ('alias') them to a specific process ink.



The Separations Preview palette in *InDesign* (and *Acrobat 6 Professional*) enables you to check your files for rogue colours.



If a printer asks for PDF/X-compliant documents, use *InDesign*'s PDF/X presets to save yourself configuration time.

Spot colours and varnishes

Setting up special print finishes in Adobe *InDesign*...

To set up a spot colour in Adobe *InDesign*, run the New Colour Swatch command from the Swatches palette menu. In the New Colour Swatch dialog window, change the Colour Type pop-up to Spot and determine how you want the colour to appear on screen and in colour proofs by choosing a Colour Mode from the selection offered. Pick a ready-made colour from one of *InDesign*'s colour libraries such as Pantone Solid Coated or use the manual sliders in CMYK, RGB or LAB mode. Then click OK. This colour will produce its own plate when you output the file to separations.

Creating a spot varnish works in exactly the same way, but you must select all the varnish-coloured objects in your layout (it helps to keep them in their own layer). Open Window> Attributes and tick the Overprint Fill option. Finally, don't forget to remind your printer that the job includes a spot colour separation, otherwise they might convert it back to process.

which paper stock is to be used, the trim size and the number of inks. It should give a delivery date and specify payment terms. You will probably be expected to pay up-front for your first orders. It should go without saying that from the three, you should pick the most suitable quote, not necessarily the cheapest one.

Error-free output

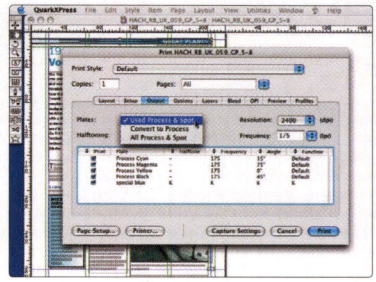
Obtain as much detail from the printer as you can with regard to what materials they expect from you when submitting files for output. Getting this information will help to ensure problem-free output. Not all printers yet support the latest versions of *Adobe InDesign* or *QuarkXPress*, which is tiresome. However, most are happy with EPS graphics produced by Macromedia *FreeHand* and Adobe *Illustrator*, and with standard formats of bitmap images such as TIFF and JPEG (flattened — no layers) from Adobe *Photoshop*.

> "If a printer supports the PDF format, you would be advised to jump at the opportunity"

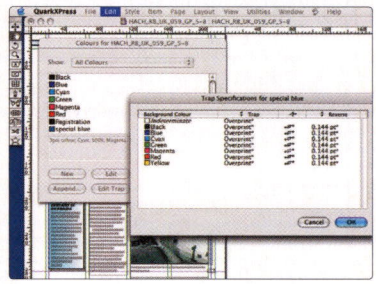
If a printer supports the PDF format, you would be advised to jump at the opportunity, assuming you can export to PDF of course. With a PDF, the most common output errors such as missing fonts and images are eradicated in a single blow, and the files are smaller and more convenient for sending electronically. The printer must provide you with the PDF creation settings it expects. Some printers may give you *Acrobat Distiller* Job Options/Settings files.

Be sure to include clear instructions and contact details when you submit the job. Remember, the person who offered you the quote will not be the person who outputs your files. Do not surprise a printer with sudden demands,

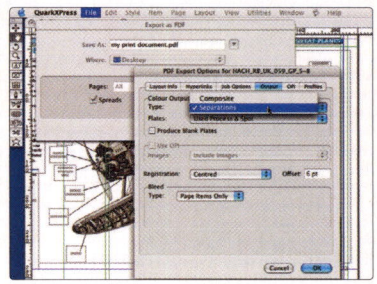
The HP Indigo 3050 and other digital presses are only good for short runs but offer the advantage of personalisation.



The Output tab in *QuarkXPress*' Print dialog window provides a list of process and spot separations contained in the document.



To force a spot colour or varnish to overprint in *QuarkXPress*, edit its Trap Specifications by going to Edit>Colours.



You can preview separations from *QuarkXPress* by exporting to PDF with the Separations option selected under Output.

either: for example, do not add a spot colour or change the trim size without giving them plenty of prior warning.

Loose ends

Additional work after printing and trimming, such as foil blocking, lamination or even binding, is known as 'finishing' and is usually charged separately. Finishing work may even be conducted on a different site altogether. Check the small print of the quote for who is responsible during delivery. Many printers consider the ownership – and therefore the insurance responsibility – of the job to be yours as soon as it drops out the end of the press.

When checking the bill, be aware that any last-minute changes you demand will be referred to as authors' corrections, and costed at sky-high rates. You will find it very hard indeed to contest these unless they did not happen at all. If the paper cost is given separately, there may be an element of 'wastage', which is normally a combination of startup copies (as the press gets going) and trimmed edges for full-bleed jobs. Very short runs and complicated jobs may incur wastage at up to 20 per cent of the total cost, while simpler and long-run jobs should see wastage dwindle to between 1 and 5 per cent.

> "Check the small print of the quote for who is responsible during delivery"

The best way to ensure a smooth ride though the presses and keep costs low is to talk with your printer. Don't make assumptions or trust to luck. Any ambiguity or query should be clarified as early as possible – it's in both your interests to do so. From tiny jobs to major orders, success in printing is assured through good communication. ca-p

COMPUTER arts projects INTERACTIVE

CD Contents

This month's line-up of software, resources and images

CD CONTENTS AT A GLANCE

Konstruktor Pro Freelancer 3.2 (PC and Mac)

FULL SOFTWARE, worth 60 euros. Use this fantastic piece of software to manage your creative and commercial projects. See opposite for more and then turn to page 96 for the tutorial.

JobOrder

DEMO: *JobOrder* is another great tool for managing your creative projects. It includes a robust feature-set for planning, tracking and generally keeping all your projects in order.

jGnash

FREE SOFTWARE: This is a tool for helping you manage your day-to-day finances and keep your bank balance in the black. *jGnash* is easy to use and extremely versatile.

Excel templates

FREE TEMPLATES, worth $270: Use these free *Excel* templates to manage your projects and keep track of finances.

liquidlibrary illustrations

FREE ILLUSTRATIONS: We've teamed up with liquidlibrary to bring you 80 royalty-free illustrations – all free to use in your commercial projects. See opposite for more.

Big Box of Art

FREE IMAGES: We present you with 500 graphics, images and illustrations from the Big Box of Art One Million. Free to use in commercial projects.

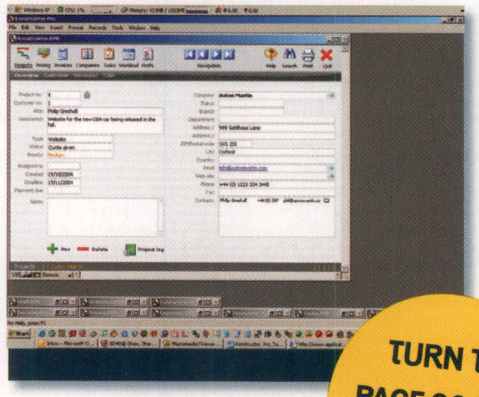
EXCLUSIVE FULL SOFTWARE WORTH £41
FREE PROJECT MANAGEMENT TOOL!
Keep track of jobs, organise clients and take care of finances with Konstruktor Pro Freelancer 3.2 (PC & MAC)
PC & MAC CD-ROM
COMPUTER arts projects CD65
INTERACTIVE
580 FREE STOCK IMAGES AND ILLUSTRATIONS!
Use these images in your commercial projects
$270 WORTH OF EXCEL BUSINESS TEMPLATES
Manage your business and finances with ease

Konstruktor Pro Freelancer 3.2

Check out this full project-management software – ideal for new design businesses...

Managing your projects is easy when you've got only one client on the go at once. But what about when your business grows and you have two, maybe three, even four jobs on at once. If you don't manage your projects efficiently, the clients will come knocking and you may end up with a sore ear and being considerably out of pocket.

Luckily, using your free version of *Konstruktor Pro Freelancer 3.2* from Application.dk, you can keep track of all your clients, invoices, jobs and, perhaps most importantly, whether you've been paid or not, all within one application. This version, exclusive to *Computer Arts Projects*, has the following features:



TURN TO PAGE 96 FOR TUTORIAL

Project overview – Store essential project data such as project description, current status, contact person, company info, deadline, priority, and so on.

Gantt chart – Manage complex projects by dividing them into phases and presenting them as a graphical timeline.

Documents – Attach multiple files to the project, import folders and launch documents with a single click. Manage virtually any file type: PDF, Word, RTF, HTML, graphics, and so on. *Konstruktor Pro* can handle documents stored on a local hard disk as well as on a remote server.

Pricing – Keep tab on the projects' operating profit, billable and non-billable expenses, calculate VAT. Use the Timesheet module to keep track of the time spent on every project.

Invoices – Create invoices with a single click. Keep track of how many invoices have already been sent and paid. The Statistics module enables users to view monthly statistics of company earnings presented as a chart.

Tasks – Manage project-related tasks such as meetings, to-dos and calls. A progress bar represents the status of each task. Colour bullets enable users to identify task type easily.

Search – Find projects, customers, contacts and invoices fast and easily by using sophisticated search capabilities.

Workload – See your workload for the next seven days.

Print – Print dialogue simplifies the print project data, company info, contacts sheets and more.

Companies – Keep track of customer data such as company address, status, branch, email, website, and so on. Store important information about a company's employees such as position, mobile phone number, email and even private info. Get a quick overview of projects assigned to a particular customer.

Staff – Stores information on company staff, contact and private info, billing rates and more. Security features enable managers to limit users' access.

More info...

See [w] www.application.dk for more on the company's software.

Also on the CD...
You'll find all the source files you need to follow this month's tutorials in the Software/Tutorial files folder on your cover CD. See individual tutorials for specific file locations.

BUSINESS RESOURCE TOOLKIT

Get your design business started

Check out this fantastic range of business software and utilities...

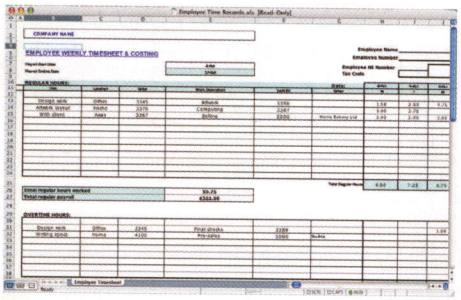
This month, as well as bringing you a plethora of images (580 to be precise – see below), we bring you a business resource kit, enabling you to quickly get your design studio up and running.

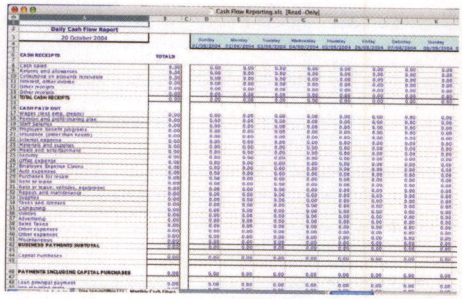
First up, there's a demo of *JobOrder* and the full software, *jGnash*. The former is an excellent tool for keeping track of those all-important clients and making sure everything goes smoothly, and on time, when working on a job. The latter, *jGnash*, is a tool that will help you keep track of your finances, and keep the bank balance in order. Remember, you'll need to think carefully about finances when starting your business, and getting a tool to keep track of them is essential.

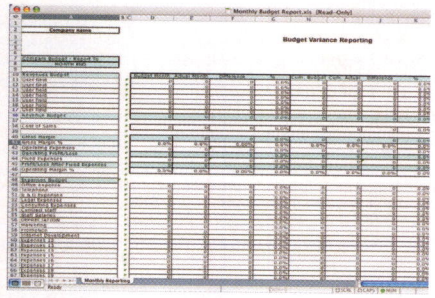
As well as demos of these applications, you'll find *Excel* business templates on the CD worth $270. These are for use in Microsoft's popular application and will help you keep track of your clients and accounts – great for integrating your business tools with your existing office software.

More info...

Boot up your cover CD and start using all of these resources now!







Free images and illustrations

We bring you 580 free images for use in your commercial projects...

The creative side to this month's cover CD comes in the form of a whopping 580 images from our friends at liquidlibrary.com and Hemera. First, there's 80 free illustrations from liquidlibrary. These are from the company's vast library of over 75,000 images. liquidlibrary is a subscription-based service that enables you to search and download images that are up to 50MB in size, with all being completely royalty-free. liquidlibrary.com offers you the ability to browse content by month – the site being continually updated with new images. See **[w]** liquidlibrary.com for more.

Next there's a huge range of images from Hemera's Big Box of Art (**[w]** www.hemera.com). We bring you a wide range of graphics, images and illustrations from their collection of one million images.

All of these images can be used in your commercial projects. **ca>p**

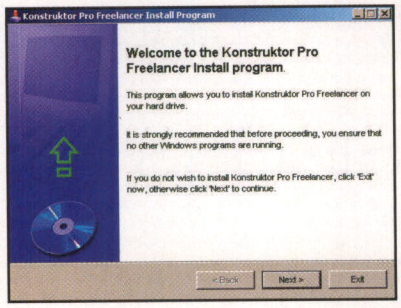
More info...

To see the full image collections, visit **[w]** www.liquidlibrary.com and **[w]** www.hemera.com.

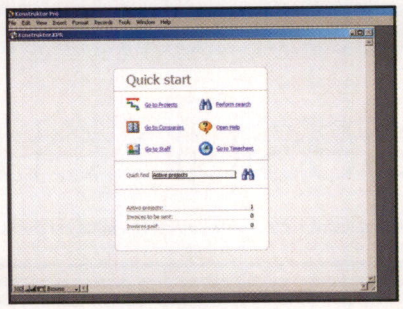
On your CD: Konstruktor Pro Freelancer 3.2

If you're a freelancer and are new to the business game, *Konstruktor Pro* (free on this month's cover CD) is a handy tool that will get your studio organised and running efficiently...

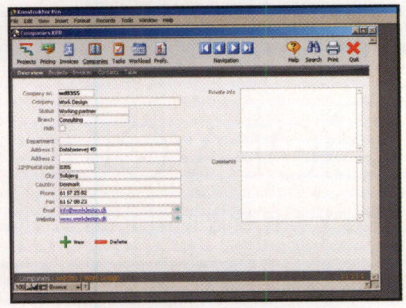
Expertise provided by Web applications specialist Ryan Carson, whose clients include NOWWASHYOURHANDS, Turnbull Ripley, Folk, Aston Martin and Rolls-Royce. Contact him at **[e]** ryan@carsonsystems.com or **[w]** www.flightdeck-online.com.


Konstruktor Pro Freelancer Install Program
Welcome to the Konstruktor Pro Freelancer Install program.
This program allows you to install Konstruktor Pro Freelancer on your hard drive.
It is strongly recommended that before proceeding, you ensure that no other Windows programs are running.
If you do not wish to install Konstruktor Pro Freelancer, click 'Exit' now, otherwise click 'Next' to continue.
< Back
Next >
Exit

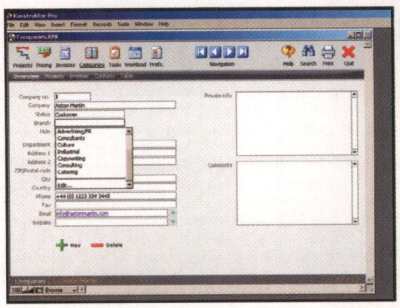
1 *Konstruktor Pro* is a great business management tool for freelancers. Installing *Konstruktor Pro Freelancer* is a breeze. Just double-click on the installer and away you go. Accept all the default values during the installation.



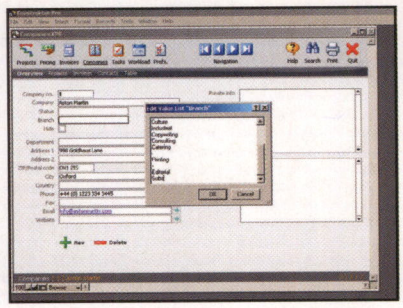
2 Once it's installed, start it up by double-clicking on the icon on your desktop. It takes a while to start up, so just be patient. When it loads, you'll see the welcome page. This is just an easy way to access the various parts of the program.



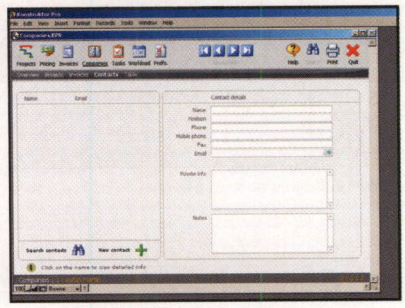
3 The first thing you'll need to do is add a new company – the one you're doing a project for. Click 'Go to Companies' and then click the green arrow that says New.



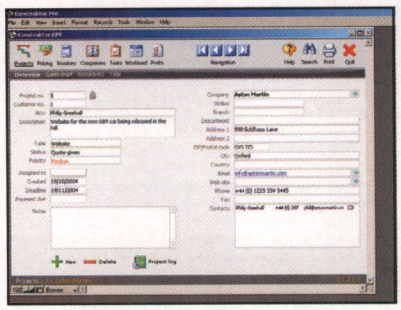
4 Fill in the details accordingly. All the fields are optional, but if you want to fill in Status or Branch and the value you want isn't there, you'll have to edit the fields. Choose Edit ... at the bottom of the list.



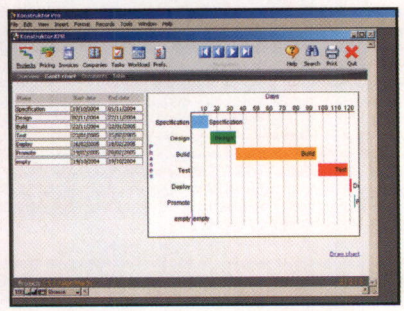
5 Just type your new entry at the bottom of the box. If you want a separator line, type one dash (-). When you're done, click OK. Select the text box again and you'll see your entry in the list.



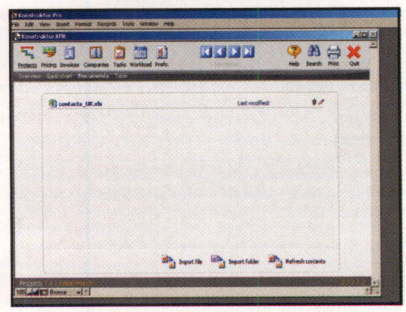
6 Now that you've added the company, you need to add a contact to the company. Click the Contacts link on the grey bar and click the green plus button marked with New Contact. Fill in the fields and click Done.



7 Now you can add a project for the company. Choose the Projects icon. Click the green plus New icon. Choose Aston Martin from the Company dropdown. Now fill in the rest of the fields. Click the lock icon next to the project number to prevent the project from being deleted.



8 If you'd like to create a Gantt chart for your project (a handy way of visualising the overall project workflow), click on the Gantt Chart link in the grey bar. Fill in each section with a name and a start/end date. If you don't use all of the fields, enter Empty and give them the same start/end date as phase one.



9 Sometimes it's useful to store *Word, Excel* or PDF files to a project, so they're easy to find. To do this, click on the Documents link on the grey bar and click Import File. Browse for your file and click Open.

Help system

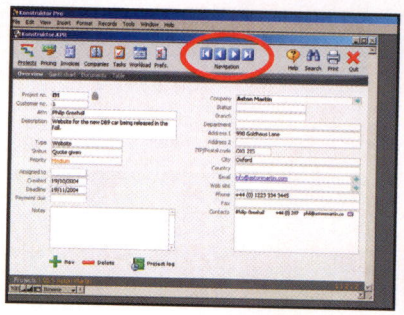
The *Konstruktor Pro* help system is fairly useful. Whenever you get stuck, click the Help icon at the top and it'll bring up the help files in a browser. The notes aren't extensive though, so you might need to download the new PDF user manual at **[w]** www.application.dk/konstruktorpro/help/Konstruktor_Pro_user_guide_v7.pdf

Is it right?

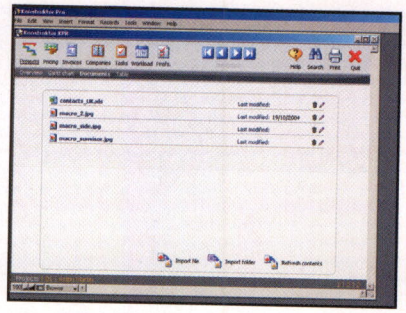
Konstruktor Pro is wonderful for those people running their own small company. It's got some useful tools, especially the invoicing feature. However, it's not the most robust tool around, so don't rely on it too heavily. And it should go without saying, but always back up the data!

Accounting tools

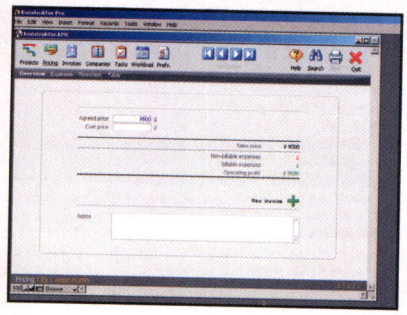
Konstruktor Pro isn't meant to be a hard-core accounting tool. If you want something that is really designed for this, try out NatWest's free business software tool at **[w]** www.natwest.com/smallbusiness/services/index.asp?navid=SBS/ACCOUNTS_



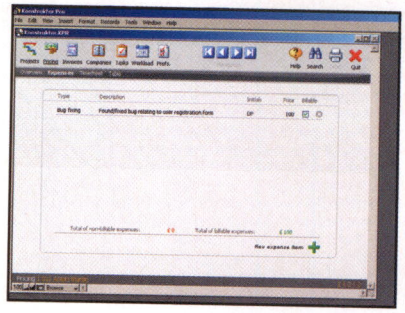
10 You can add a whole folder of documents to a project. Click the Import Folder icon, choose your folder and hit OK. *Konstruktor* then places all the files it finds into the Documents section.



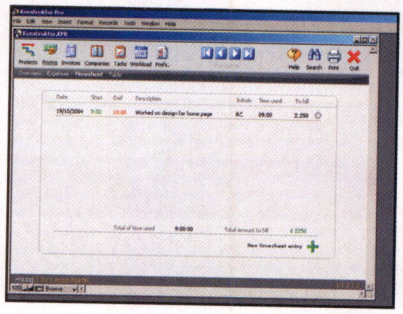
11 In order to navigate between various records (projects, companies, contacts, invoices, and so) use the blue buttons labelled Navigation. This enables you to go forward and backward between the records.



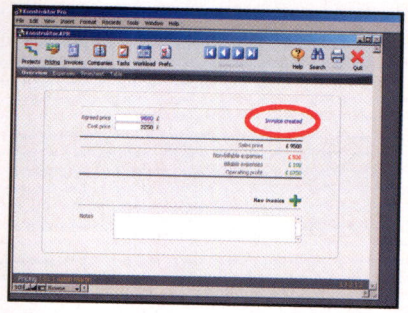
12 The invoicing/pricing feature is quite cool in *Konstruktor Pro*. Click on the Projects icon and make sure the Aston Martin website project is on the screen. Now click the Pricing icon. Fill in the value for Agreed Price.



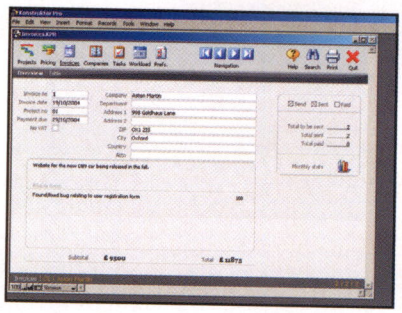
13 Now choose the Expenses link on the grey bar and click 'New expense item'. Fill in each field as appropriate. If you check Billable at the end, it will add this expense to the final invoice. Check Billable and then click the Overview link in the grey bar to see how it affects the invoice.



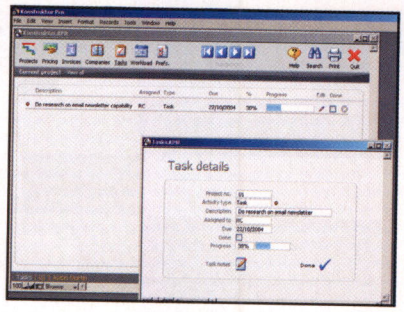
14 Choose the Timesheet link in the grey bar. Fill in the values as appropriate. You'll see that it calculates the 'Time used' and 'To bill' fields automatically. The hourly rate is dependent on the setting for the assigned person (Prefs>Advanced Settings>Staff). After you're done, click the Overview link on the grey bar to see the effects.



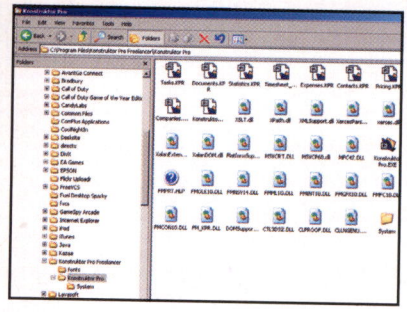
15 After you've finished a project, you can generate an invoice for the project. Click Pricing (again, make sure you have the right project selected) and click New Invoice. You'll see the text 'Invoice created' appear in blue.



16 Click on Invoices and you'll see the new invoice you've created. It sets the payment due date according to the Prefs (Prefs>Invoicing period). Once you mail/email the invoice, click the Sent box. If the payment period passes and you haven't clicked Paid, it will put a red OVERDUE notice on the invoice. Click the Print icon to print the invoice.



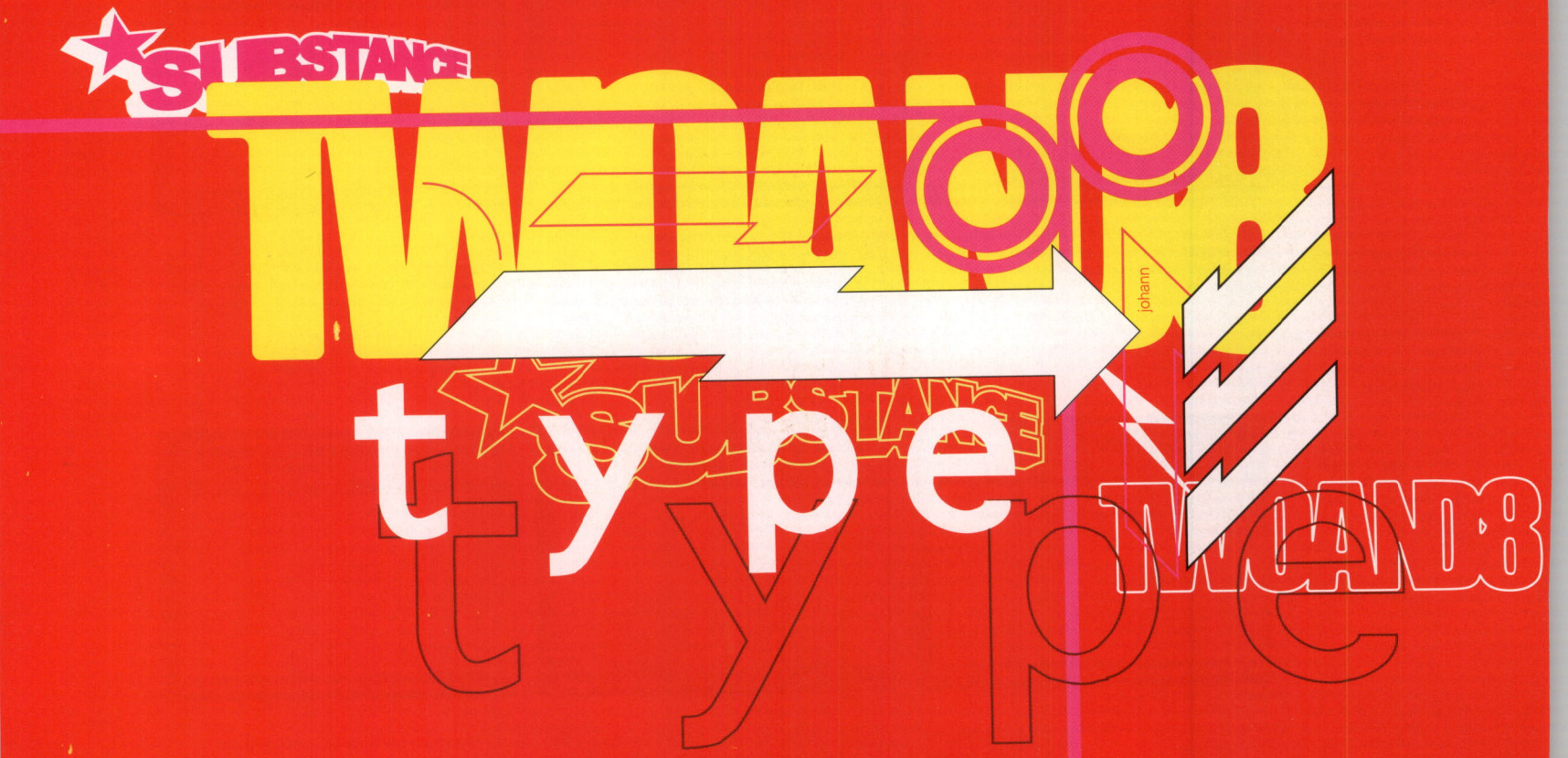
17 Another great feature of *Konstruktor Pro* is the Tasks. Click the Tasks icon and the New Task button. Fill in the values as appropriate. As you complete the task, you can change the percentage done amount, to show your progress. Again, choose your project in Projects before clicking Tasks.



18 Finally, make sure you back up your data on a regular basis (daily is best). Copy all of the .kpm files from Program Files\Konstruktor Pro Freelancer\Konstruktor Pro onto a CD and keep them in a safe place. ca-p

NEXT ISSUE IN COMPUTER arts projects

GET CREATIVE WITH TYPE



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PICK THE RIGHT FONT
This comprehensive guide tells you how to pick the right font for the job – whether it's for print, motion or the web.

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All contents correct at time of going to press

Computer Arts Projects 66 • ON SALE Tuesday 07 December 2004!

'The Making of Ryan'

Chris Landreth to showcase 'Ryan' at 3December 2004.

Awards
TO DATE

Annecy International Animation Festival
Special Jury Prize

*

Cannes Film Festival Critics' Week
Kodak Discovery Award for Best Short Film
Canal+ Award for Best Short Film

*

2004 Worldwide Short Film Festival
Sun Life Financial Award for Best Canadian Short

*

SIGGRAPH 2004
Jury Award

*

PRIX ARS Electronica 2004
Linz, Austria
Golden Nica
Computer Animation Visual Effects category

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Unlimited websites	✔	
Unlimited sub-domains	✔	
Unlimited FTP access accounts	✔	
Unlimited site traffic	✔	
Latest firewall protection	✔	
Redundant server disks	✔	
SSL secure web space		✔
SSH secure access (Linux only)	✔	
5 star online control panel	✔	
Bandwidth monitoring	✔	
Graphical web stats		✔
Point unlimited domains to your web space	✔	
Load-balancing		✔
Bulk domain name registration account	✔	
Windows 2003 IIS6 (your choice)	✔	
Red Hat Enterprise Linux (your choice)		✔
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ASP scripting on Windows		✔
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ODBC access	✔	
Microsoft SQL support	✔	
MySQL support	✔	
Control panel custom branding		✔
Personal control panel		✔
Custom name servers		✔
EMAIL		
Unlimited POP3 mailboxes	✔	
Unlimited auto-responders	✔	
Unlimited mail forwarding	✔	
Unlimited email aliases	✔	
Spam filtering		✔
Virus scanning		✔
Professional web mail	✔	
SMS new email alerts	✔	
Advanced SMS alerts		✔
EXTRAS & SUPPORT		
Dial-up access	✔	
Broadband access from £18.99		✔
24 x 7 telephone support	✔	
24 x 7 email support	✔	
Comprehensive online knowledge base	✔	
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